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The Drama





VICTORIAN EDITION


The Drama

ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE
AND INFLUENCE ON
CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ALFRED BATES, M. A.
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.



London
The Athenian Society
MCMIII



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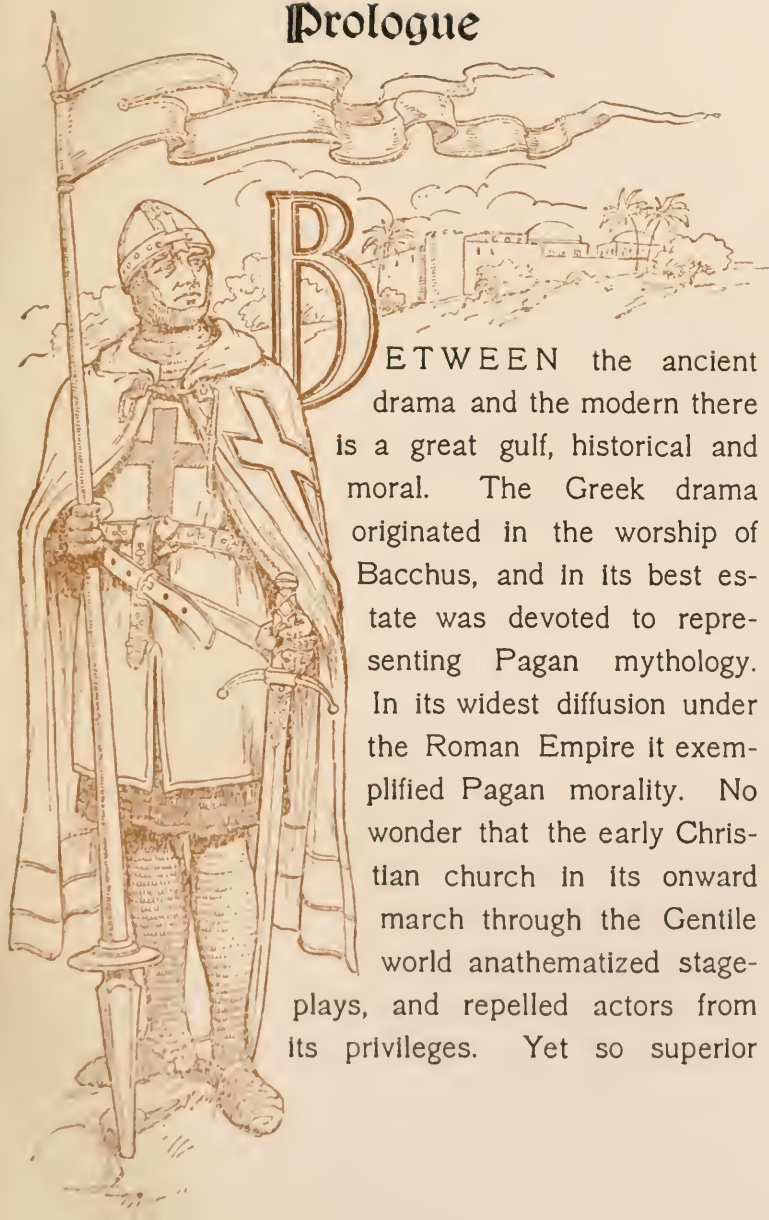
THE DRAMA OF TIBET
After an original painting by L. Sabattier

The Drama of Thibet is a religious spectacle show, occurring in the spring and fall, similar to our Easter festivities and the Mardi Gras. It is prepared by the monks of the convents, and performed by women of prominence and wealth, who are masked, costumed with richness and adorned with jewels.





Prologue



BETWEEN the ancient drama and the modern there is a great gulf, historical and moral. The Greek drama originated in the worship of Bacchus, and in its best estate was devoted to representing Pagan mythology. In its widest diffusion under the Roman Empire it exemplified Pagan morality. No wonder that the early Christian church in its onward march through the Gentile world anathematized stage-plays, and repelled actors from its privileges. Yet so superior

PROLOGUE

were the ancient dramas as literature that they were carefully preserved in monasteries and taught in schools. And so deeply-rooted in the human mind is the dramatic instinct, that there was always a strong popular desire for its gratification, and bands of players strolled from city to city.

Therefore, later the Church began to allow the drama—to sanction it within certain limits. The clergy sought to keep the control of acting in their own hands. They presented the historic facts of Christianity dramatically within the walls of the churches under the name of Mysteries. These were soon extended to include scenes of the history of the world as related in the Bible. After a time troupes of professional performers, still somewhat connected with the Church, carried these exhibitions to fairs in the open country. The trade-guilds also adopted them as part of their annual celebrations. Besides Mysteries, there were Miracle-plays, founded chiefly on legends of the saints. Later came the Moralities, in which allegorical personages represented virtues and vices, and rules of conduct were enforced. On all these exhibi-

PROLOGUE

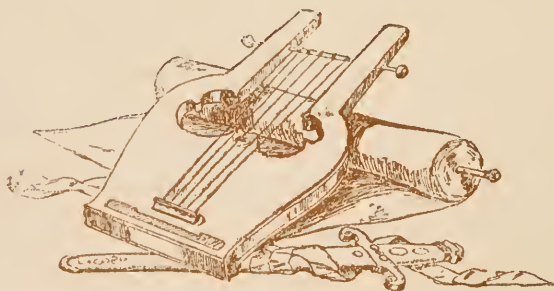
tions the stamp of the Church was impressed; but it grew fainter when laymen became professional players and held the mirror up to nature.

To this transition period and its quaint productions, not without real merit, the present volume is devoted. Although these religious plays belong generally to the Middle Ages, forming indeed a frail suspension-bridge across the gulf between the old and the new world of the drama, it is well known that remarkable survivals of them still remain. Of the famous Ober-Ammergau Passion-play, which every tenth year draws thousands of pilgrims to Bavaria, we give a full and impressive description. Spain also cherishes the religious play in her "Autos Sacramentales," to which Calderon, her loftiest dramatic genius, has contributed. As a specimen of his Scriptural work, "Belshazzar's Feast" is here presented.

Modern religious feeling has prevented the attempted revival of the Passion-play on the American stage; but it has approved the presentation of the sixteenth century morality, "Everyman," and this singularly impressive drama is offered to our readers.

PROLOGUE

The invention of printing in the fifteenth century spread broadcast the precious treasures of ancient learning, and gave a wonderful stimulus to the human intellect. In the glorious Renaissance there was a new birth of the secular drama. A glimpse of the dawn of this movement illuminates our pages; but its full glory is reserved for later volumes.



Religious Drama

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ALFRED BATES

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

JAMES P. BOYD, A.M., L.B.

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

PROF. JOHN P. LAMBERTON

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



VOLUME IV

London—New York

Publishers: Smart and Stanley

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Entered at Stationers' Hall,
London, England.

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Religious Drama.

I.

Inception and Growth of the Religious Drama.

Soon after the reign of Constantine, as we have seen, came the downfall of dramatic art in Rome, though it was not entirely extinguished even by the irruptions of northern barbarians. But a more powerful foe than the Huns and Goths had by this time risen into power; for the whole authority of the Christian Church, now acknowledged as the religion of the Roman empire, was directed against the drama in all its forms, the comedies of Terence and the tragedies of Seneca being placed as strictly under the ban as the most indecent performances that ministered to the lewd itch of eye and ear. Then, indeed, the doom of the drama was sealed; nor was that doom undeserved, for the remnants of the literary drama had long been overshadowed by entertainments such as both earlier and later Roman emperors—Domitian and Trajan as well as Valerius and Constantine—had found themselves obliged to prohibit in the interests of public morality and order. The theatre had contributed its utmost to the demoralization

of the world, and the attitude taken by the Christian Church toward the stage was in general as unavoidable as its particular expressions were at times heated by fanaticism or distorted by ignorance. Had she not visited with her anathema a wilderness of decay, she could not herself have become—what she little dreamed of becoming—the nursing mother of the new birth of an art which seemed incapable of regeneration.

Players and Playgoers Excommunicated.

Rymer, the antiquary, relates that in the first ages of Christianity any one concerned with the theatre was not allowed baptism. Cyril declares that “when, in our baptism, we say, ‘I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works and pomps,’ those pomps of the devil are stage plays and the like vanities.” Tertullian affirms that they who in baptism renounce the devil and his pomps cannot go to a play without turning apostates. Thus the Greek and Latin fathers had an ample field for their eloquence and declamation before the Arians, the Gnostics and other intestine heresies sprang up to divert them. The entire spirit of the early Christian fathers was averse to dramatic composition and representation as savoring of worldliness; Cyprian, Basil and Clement of Alexandria are very warm upon the subject, and so is Chrysostom, who cries shame that people should listen to a comedian with the same ears that they hear an evangelical preacher. Augustine maintains that they who go to plays are as bad as those that write or act them. Tertullian, in his

warmth against tragedians, observes that the devil sets them on their high pantofles to give Christ the lie, who said, nobody can add one cubit to his stature. Rymer adds, in his *Short View of Tragedy*, that these denunciations from single authors had no great effect, for the tragedian still walked on in his high shoes. "Yet might they well expect a more terrible storm from the reverend fathers when they met in a body together, in council œcumenical. Then, indeed, began the ecclesiastical thunder to fly about, and presently the theatres, tragedy, comedy, bear-baiting, gladiators and heretics are given all to the devil without distinction. Nor was it sufficient for the zeal of those times to put down stage-plays. All heathen learning fell under the like censure and condemnation. One might as well have told them of the antipodes as persuaded the reading of Tully's Offices; they were afraid of the Greek philosophy like children of a bugbear, lest it fetch them away. A council of Carthage would not allow that a bishop should read any heathen book. How heartily St. Austin begs God's pardon for having read Virgil with delight in his graver years! What a plunge was St. Jerome put to by Rufinus laying to his charge the reading of heathen authors!"

Though, even in the fourth century, actors and mountebanks had been excluded from the benefit of Christian sacraments, and excommunication had been extended to those who visited theatres, instead of churches, on Sundays and holidays, yet the entertainments of the condemned profession had never been entirely suppressed and had even occasionally received

imperial patronage. Gradually, however, the mimes and their fellows became a wandering fraternity who appeared at festivals, when they were wanted, and vanished again into the deep obscurity which has ever covered that mysterious existence, a stroller's life. It was thus that these strange intermediaries of civilization carried down such traditions as survived of the acting drama of pagan antiquity into succeeding ages.

Monastic Writings.

While scattered bands of strolling players thus kept alive something of the looser, if not of the nobler, elements of their art, there were not wanting written compositions to bridge the gap between ancient and modern dramatic literature. Among others belonging to the latter part of the fourth century may be mentioned the *Passion of Christ*, commonly attributed to Gregory Nazianzen and written chiefly for educational purposes, on the model of Euripides, Menander or Terence. Probably with the same design were composed the so-called comedies of Hrotsvitha, the Benedictine nun of Gandersheim in Eastphalian Saxony, which are associated, in the history of Christian literature, with the spiritual revival of the tenth century in the days of Otto the Great. Though avowedly imitated from Terence, they were in the nature of religious exercises, taking for their themes the martyrdoms, miracles and miraculous conversions related in the legends of Christian saints. Thus, from about the ninth to the twelfth century, Germany and France became

acquainted with the religious or monastic drama, and this acquaintance extended to England after the Norman conquest. It was mainly performed by monks and nuns, and sometimes by children under their care, an exhibition of the latter kind being the *Play of St. Katharine*, acted at Dunstable about the year 1110. Nothing is known of it beyond the fact of its performance, and that similar plays had been acted before that date.

Mimes.

At a later time the productions of the cloister were mingled with more popular forms of the early Christian drama, chiefly through the employment of mimes, or *joculatores*, as now they began to be called. By them were kept alive, or revived, entertainments more dramatic than the purely religious plays. Moreover, there were, both among Celtic and Teutonic peoples, remnants of religious rites containing dramatic elements, and more was borrowed from heathen festivals of Roman or other origin. In different countries the mimes suited themselves to different tastes and to the different tendencies of native literature, as each one gradually emerged from the obscurity of the dark ages. The literature of the troubadours of Provence, which speedily found its way into Italy and Spain, came only into occasional contact with the beginnings of the monastic drama, as in *The Foolish Virgins*, a mystic play of the twelfth century. In northern France the *joculatores*, or *jongleurs*, as here they were termed, were identified with the *trouvères*, whose songs were

composed in commemoration of deeds of war. All these, together with the minstrels, attached in England as attendants to the households of the wealthy, were the successors of the mimes of Roman days. They were no longer regarded with the contempt of former times, often attaining wealth and distinction through civil and even military preferment. Thus, at the battle of Hastings, it was a mime, named Taillefer, who rode first into the fight, singing the songs of Roland and Charlemagne while he tossed his sword in the air and caught it again. In England, Norman minstrels quickly took the place of the less skillful gleemen of the Saxon period, while here, as elsewhere, the humbler members of the craft strolled from castle and convent to village green and village street, exhibiting as jugglers their pantomimic and other tricks.

Dramatic Elements in Church Service.

Thus, through the assistance of the very Church which had condemned them, the professional element of the stage survived, at least as tributary to the main stream of the religious drama, whose source was in the liturgy of the Church itself. Even the celebration of the mass contained a dramatic element, the reading of the Scripture forming the epic portion, and the anthems and responses the lyric feature of the service. As early at least as the fifth century, in order to increase the attractions of worship, living pictures, accompanied with songs, were used on special occasions to illustrate the Gospel narrative, and thus a certain amount of action

was gradually introduced into the service. Add to this the epic and lyric accompaniments, together with certain mimical adjuncts, and the "Liturgical Mystery," which was the earliest form of the Christian drama, was in existence. This had been accomplished not later than the tenth century, when it was the custom for priests to perform what were termed the offices of the shepherds, the innocents and the holy sepulchre, in connection with the Gospel of the day. In France, in the twelfth century, or, perhaps, in the eleventh, short Latin texts were written for these occasions, including passages from the legend of St. Nicholas, as well as from scriptural story, these texts being later composed in French, of which the earliest example is in the mystery of the Resurrection. In time, whole series of mysteries were joined together, finally resulting in what was known as the "collective mystery," merely a scholastic term, but one to which the principal examples of the mystery play correspond.

A Jewish play, of which fragments are still preserved in Greek iambics, is the first drama known to have been written on a Scripture subject. It is taken from the *Exodus*, and the principal characters are Moses, Zippora, and God speaking from the burning bush. Moses delivers the prologue in a speech of sixty lines, and his rod is turned into a serpent on the stage. The author of the play is Ezekiel, a native of Alexandria, who is called the tragic poet of the Jews. Warton supposes that he wrote it to animate his dispersed brethren with the hopes of a future deliverance from their captivity under the leadership of a new Moses,

and that it was composed in imitation of the Greek drama at the close of the second century.

The productions of the Mediæval or Religious drama may be technically divided into three classes. The Mysteries proper deal with scriptural events only, their purpose being to set forth, with the aid of the prophetic or preparatory history of the Old Testament, and more especially of the fulfilling events of the New, the central mystery of the redemption of the world, as accomplished by the nativity, the passion and the resurrection of Christ. But in fact these were not kept distinctly apart from the Miracle plays, which are, strictly speaking, concerned with the legends of the saints of the Church. Of these species the Miracles must more especially have been fed from the resources of the monastic literary drama. Thirdly, the Moralities, or Moral plays, teach, or pretended to teach, and illustrate general truths allegorically, their characters being personified virtues or qualities. Of the Moralities the Norman trouvères had been the inventors, and, doubtless, hence the innovation to emancipate dramatic performances from the control of the Church.

Secular Elements.

The attitude of the clergy toward the dramatic performances which had arisen out of the elaboration of the services of the Church, but which soon admitted elements from other sources, was not, and could not be, uniform. As the plays grew longer, their paraphernalia more extensive and their spectators more numerous,

they began to be represented outside as well as inside the churches, and the use of the vernacular, in place of Latin, came to be gradually preferred. Miracles were less dependent on the connection with church services than Mysteries proper, and lay associations, guilds and schools in particular, soon began to act plays in honor of their patron saints in or near their own halls. Lastly, as scenes and characters of a more or less trivial description were admitted even into plays acted or superintended by the clergy, as some of these characters came to be expected by the audiences for conventional extravagance or fun, every new Herod seeking to out-Herod his predecessor, and the devils and their chiefs asserting themselves as indispensable favorites, the comic element in the religious drama increased, and that drama itself, even where it remained associated with the Church, grew less distinctly sacred. The endeavor to sanctify the popular tastes to religious uses, which connects itself with the institution of the great festival of Corpus Christi, when the symbol of the mystery of the incarnation was borne in solemn procession, led to the closer union of the dramatic exhibitions—hence often called *processus*—with this and other religious feasts; but it neither limited their range, nor controlled their development.

France.

At times favored, at times denounced, by the clergy, dramatic entertainments thus flourished for centuries, in some countries more, in others less, religious in

their character, and variously reinforced by the efforts of the craftsmen of the acting profession. In France, where they had always preserved a secular side, they soonest advanced into forms connecting themselves with later growths of the drama. At Paris the fraternity of the Bazoche—clerks of the Parliament and the chatelet—acquired, in 1303, the right of conducting the popular festivals, but after the Confrérie de la Passion, who devoted themselves originally to the performances of Passion plays, had obtained a royal privilege for this purpose in 1402, the Bazoche gave itself up to the production of Moralities. A third association, calling itself the “Enfans sans souci”—the Devil-may-cares—having about the same time acquired the right of acting sotties—short comic plays with allegorical figures. Then the other companies interwove their Mysteries and Moralities with comic scenes from popular life, and gradually confined themselves to secular themes. Thus the transition to the regular drama here easily prepared itself; already in 1395 we find the Confrérie performing a serious play on the story of Griseldis, and the sotties and farces, after mingling real types with allegorical personages, had come to exclude the latter. One of these, *Maistre Pierre Patelin*, acted in 1480 by the Bazoche, is, however slight in plot, in all essentials a comedy.

Italy.

No Italian Mystery has been preserved from an earlier date than 1243, about which time associations were also formed in that country for the production of reli-

gious plays. These seem to have differed but little from those of northern Europe, except as to a less degree of coarseness in their comic characters. Plays on Old Testament subjects were called *Figure*, on New, *Vangeli*; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were elaborated and produced with great care and bore various names, of which *Rappresentazioni* was the most common. The spectacular magnificence of theatrical displays accorded with that of the processions, both ecclesiastical and lay—the *Trionfi*, as they were called in the days of Dante—and the religious drama gradually acquired an academical character, assimilating it to the classical attempts which gave rise to the regular Italian drama. The poetry of the troubadours, which had come from Provence into Italy, here frequently took a dramatic form, and perhaps suggested his early experiments in this to Petrarch, the father of the Italian renaissance. After his death there are traces of similar literary efforts in the *volgare Provenzale* dialect. Meanwhile, remnants of the ancient popular entertainments had survived in the improvised farces acted at the courts, in the churches and among the people; the Roman carnival had preserved its wagon-plays, and numerous links remained to connect the popular modern comedy of the Italians with the Atellanes and Mimes of their ancestors.

Spain.

In Spain, where all traces of the ancient Roman theatre had disappeared after the Moorish conquest, the extant remains of the Religious drama date from a still

later period than the Italian—the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Its beginnings presented themselves in an advanced form, which aroused the opposition of the clergy, who sought to take the plays under their own control. In the secular literature of Spain nothing dramatic can be proved to have existed till the latter part of the fifteenth century. It had probably been customary from early times to insert in the Mysteries so-called *entremeses* or interludes; but it is not till 1472 that in the couplets of Mingo Revulgo and, about the same time, in another dialogue by the same author, we have attempts of a kind resembling the Italian *Conirasi*.

Germany.

In Germany, the history of whose drama so widely differs from that of the Spanish, Religious plays were performed probably as early as the twelfth century at the Christmas and Easter festivals. Other festivals were afterward celebrated in the same way, but up to the Reformation Easter enjoyed the preference. About the fourteenth century Miracle plays began to be frequently performed, and as these often treated subjects of historical interest, local or other, the transition to the barren beginnings of the German historical drama was afterward easy. Though these early German plays often have an element of the Moralities, they were not, as in France, blended with the drolleries of the professional strollers, which, carried on chiefly in carnival time, gave rise to the "Shrove Tuesday plays"—scenes from common life, largely interspersed with practical

fun. To these last a more enduring literary form was first given in the fifteenth century by Hans Rosenplut, the predecessor of Hans Sachs. By this time a connection was establishing itself in Germany between the dramatic amusements of the people and the literary labors of the mastersingers, but the Religious drama proper survived in Catholic Germany far beyond the times of the Reformation, and still survives at Ober-Ammergau, in the Bavarian Highlands, and at other places of less fame in the Tyrol.

England.

From the Religious drama, as developed in England, a fair idea may be derived of the general character of these mediæval productions. The Miracle plays, or Miracles, of which we hear in London in the twelfth century, were probably written in Latin and acted by ecclesiastics, but in the following century mention is made—in the way of prohibition—of plays acted by professional players. In England, as elsewhere, the clergy either sought to retain their control over the religious plays, which continued to be occasionally acted in churches even after the Reformation, or denounced them, with or without qualification. In Cornwall Miracles in the native Cymric dialect were performed at an early date, but those which have been preserved are apparently copies of English originals. Unlike the English plays, however, they were represented in the open country, in extensive amphitheatres constructed for the purpose.

The flourishing period of English Miracle plays begins with their performance by trading companies in various towns. Of this practice Chester is said to have set the example in the latter half of the thirteenth century; it was followed by Coventry, York and London, in which last city the performers were the parish clerks. Three collections, in addition to some single examples, of such plays, have come down to us—the Towneley plays, which were probably acted at the fairs of Woodkirk, near Wakefield, and those bearing the names of Chester and Coventry. Their dates are more or less uncertain; that of the Towneley plays may be earlier than the fourteenth century; the Chester may be ascribed to the close of the fourteenth or the earlier part of the fifteenth; the body of the Coventry probably belongs to the fifteenth or sixteenth. Many of the individual plays in these collections were doubtless founded on French originals; others are taken direct from Scripture, from the apocryphal Gospels or from the legends of the saints. Their characteristic feature is the combination of a series of plays into one collective whole, exhibiting the entire course of Bible history from the creation to the day of judgment.

“The manner of these plays,” we read in a description of those at Chester, dating from the close of the sixteenth century, “was: Every company had its pageant, which pageants were a high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they appareled themselves, and in the higher room they played, being all open at the top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places where they played

them were in every street. They begin first at the abbey gates, and when the first pageant was played, it was wheeled to the high cross before the mayor, and so to every street, and so every street had a pageant playing before them at one time till all the pageants appointed for the day were played; and when one pageant was near ended, word was brought from street to street, that so they might come in place thereof, exceedingly orderly, and all the streets have their pageants afore them all at one time playing together; to see which plays was great resort, and also scaffolds and stages made in the streets in those places where they determined to play their pageants."

Each play was performed by the representatives of a particular trade or company, after whom it was called the fishers', glovers', etc., pageant, while a prologue was spoken by a herald. As a rule the movable stage sufficed for the action, though we find horsemen riding up to the scaffold, and Herod instructed to "rage in the pagond and in the strete also." There is no probability that the stage was, as in France, divided into three platforms with a dark cavern at the side of the lowest, appropriated respectively to the Heavenly Father and his angels, to saints and glorified men, to mere men, and to souls in hell. Yet the last-named locality was frequently displayed in the English Miracles, with or without fire in its mouth. The costumes were in part conventional—divine and saintly personages being distinguished by gilt hair and beards, Herod clad as a Saracen, the demons wearing hideous heads, the souls black and white coats, according to their kind, and the angels gold wings.

Doubtless, these performances abounded in what seem to us ludicrous features, and though their main purpose was serious, they were not, in England at least, intended to be devoid of fun. But many of these features are, in truth, only homely and naïve, and the simplicity of feeling they exhibit is at times not without its pathos. The occasional excessive grossness is due to an absence of refinement in taste rather than to an obliquity of moral sentiment. The Coventry plays, which were possibly written by clerical hands, show an advance upon the others. In the same plays may be observed an element of abstract figures, which connects them with a different species of the Mediæval drama.

Morality Plays.

The Moralities correspond to the love for moral allegory which manifests itself in many periods of literature, and nowhere more so than in England. Hence the popularity of the Moral-play, which indeed never equaled that of the Miracles, but sufficed to keep alive the former species until it received a fresh impulse from the connection established between it and the "new learning of the Reformation, together with its new political and religious questions. Moreover, a specially popular element was supplied to these plays which, in manner of representation, differed in no essential point from the Miracles. This was in a character borrowed from the latter and, in the Moralities, usually provided with a companion, whose task it was to lighten the weight of such abstractions as Sapience and Justice.

These were the devil and his attendant, the Vice, of whom the latter seems to have been of native origin, and, as he was usually dressed in a fool's habit, was probably suggested by the familiar custom of keeping an attendant fool at court or in great houses. The Vice had many aliases, as Sin, Fraud, Iniquity, but his usual duty was to torment and tease the devil, his master, for the edification and diversion of the audience. He was gradually blended with the domestic fool, who survived in the regular drama.

The earlier English Moralities—from the reign of Henry VI to that of Henry VII—usually allegorize the conflict between good and evil in the mind and life of man, without any side intention of theological controversy; such also is still essentially the purpose of the Morality-play we possess by Henry VIII's poet, the witty Skelton, and even another, perhaps the most perfect example of its class, which, in date, is later than the Reformation. But if such theology as *Every Man* teaches is the orthodox doctrine of Rome, its successor, Wever's *Lusty Juventas*, breathes the spirit of the Reformation. In the early part of Elizabeth's reign the Morality-plays are largely occupied with religious controversy, in some instances with an admixture of political topics.

Interludes.

The transition from the Morality to the regular drama was effected, on the one hand, by the intermixture of historical personages, as in Bishop Bale's *King Johan*, on the other by the introduction of types of real life,

side by side with abstract figures. A further step was taken in presenting short farces, in the form of interludes, after the fashion of the French, and dealing entirely with real men and women. The best of them were by John Heywood, but other able writers took the same direction, and thus the allegory of abstractions was undermined on the stage, just as in didactic literature the ground was cut from under its feet by the *Ship of Fools*. But while facilitating the advent of comedy, the interludes by no means superseded the Religious drama, for both Miracle and Morality-plays survived into the Elizabethan age, even after the regular drama had made good its foothold on the stage.

Such, in brief, as gathered from the leading authorities, is an outline of the dramatic annals of the middle ages—from the fourth to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Between the close of the classic drama and the renewal of its examples which attended the revival of classical learning, the stage produced little that will endure, except as curiosities of literature. Nor can it be said that the influence of the Religious drama was altogether beneficial. It is a question whether Miracle or Passion-plays fostered religious sentiment; whether Morality-plays improved the morals of the community, while all of them tended to bring religion into contempt, to cheapen its mysteries and to throw discredit on doctrines held in reverence by the Christian world. At best the effect was purely emotional and had nothing to do with the calm exercises of which true worship consists. It may have been the worship of the senses, but it was not the worship of the soul.

II.

The Religious Drama in Europe.

It was chiefly by the fathers of the Church, as we have seen, that the drama was saved from extinction, and had its influence been entirely for good, we should have regarded them with unmixed feelings of gratitude, for the preservation of this, as of other branches of art. Such, indeed, is the sentiment commonly entertained for some of the earlier fathers, for men like Apollinarius and Gregory Nazianzen, the latter for the first time introducing the Virgin on the stage in his only extant play. At Constantinople, where he ruled as bishop, his works were substituted for those of Sophocles and Euripides, with the choruses changed into Christian hymns, and it is said that his audiences found in them as much to admire as in those of the classic poets.

Influence of the Church.

At a later period, in order to wean the people from the ancient spectacles, particularly the Bacchanalian and other annual festivities, religious shows were instituted partaking of the same spirit of licentiousness.

About the year 990 Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, caused the Feast of Fools and the Feast of the Ass, with other religious farces of that sort, to be exhibited in the Greek church.

The Feast of Fools.

Beletus, who lived in 1182, mentions the *Feast of Fools*, as celebrated in some places on New Year's day, in others on Twelfth day, and in others the week following. In France, at different cathedral churches, there was a bishop or an archbishop of fools elected; and even a pope of fools. These mock pontiffs had usually their suite of ecclesiastics, and one of their ridiculous ceremonies was to shave the precentor of fools upon a stage erected before the church in the presence of the populace, who were amused during the operation by his lewd and vulgar discourses, accompanied by actions equally reprehensible. They were mostly attired in the ridiculous dresses of pantomime players and buffoons, and so habited entered the church and performed the service accompanied by crowds of the laity in masks, representing monsters, or with their faces smutted to excite fear or laughter, as occasion might require.

Some of them personated females and practised wanton devices. Some interrupted or burlesqued divine service, and ran leaping all over the church. The bishop or pope of fools performed the service habited in pontifical garments, and gave his benediction; when it was concluded he was seated in an open car-

riage and drawn about to different parts of the town, followed by a large train of clergy and laymen and a cart filled with filth, which was thrown upon the populace assembled to see the procession. These licentious festivities were called the December liberties. They were always held at Christmas time, or near to it, but not confined to one particular day, and seem to have lasted through part of January.

The Feast of the Ass.

The *Feast of the Ass*, as it was anciently celebrated in France, consisted almost entirely of dramatic show. It was instituted in honor of Balaam's ass, and at one of the performances the clergy walked on Christmas day in procession, habited to represent prophets and others. Moses appeared in an alb and cope, with a long beard and rod. David had a green vestment. Balaam, with an immense pair of spurs, rode on a wooden ass, which inclosed a speaker. There were also six Jews and six Gentiles. Among other characters the poet Virgil was introduced singing monkish rhymes as a Gentile prophet and a translator of the Sybilline oracles. Thus they moved in procession through the body of the church, chanting versicles and conversing in character on the nativity and kingdom of Christ, till they came into the choir. The same ceremony, as it was performed at the same season, in the cathedral church of Rouen, commenced with a procession in which the clergy represented the prophets of the Old Testament who foretold the birth of Christ, then followed Balaam mounted on

his ass, Zachariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, the sybil Erythree, Simeon, Virgil, Nebuchadnezzar, and the three children in the Chaldean furnace. After the procession entered the cathedral, several groups of persons performed the part of Jews and Gentiles, to whom the choristers addressed speeches; afterward they called on the prophets one by one, who came forward successively and delivered a passage relative to the Messiah. The other characters advanced to occupy their proper situations, and reply in certain verses to the demands of the choristers. They performed the miracle of the Babylonian furnace; Nebuchadnezzar spoke, the sybil appeared at the last, and then an anthem was sung, which concluded the ceremony.

Another *Feast of the Ass*, anciently celebrated at Beauvais yearly on the 14th of January, commemorated the flight of the Virgin into Egypt with the Infant Jesus. To represent the Virgin, the most beautiful girl in the city, with a pretty child in her arms, was placed on an ass richly caparisoned. Thus mounted she preceded the bishop and his clergy, and they all went in grand procession from the cathedral to the parish church of St. Stephen. On entering the chancel, they arranged themselves on the right side of the altar; the mass immediately commenced, and the Introit, Gloria Patri, the Creed, and other parts of the service were terminated by the burden of Hin-Han, Hin-Han, in imitation of the braying of an ass. The officiating priest, instead of saying *Ita Missa est* at the end of the mass, concluded by singing three times Hin-Han, Hin-Han, Hin-Han, and during the performance hymns

were sung in praise of the ass. The singing concluded, the animal, covered with precious ornaments, was then solemnly conducted to the middle of the choir.

Other Mædæval Feasts.

In a paper read before the English Society of Antiquaries, in 1804, Francis Douce, one of the fellows, made the following statement concerning these ceremonies: "The Feast of Calends, which arose out of the Roman Saturnalia, resembled, in a great degree, the excesses of a modern carnival, and the archbishops and bishops degraded themselves by joining in these sports with the inferior clergy." An illumination in the celebrated Bedford Missal, representing several men feasting in a church-yard, is noticed by Douce as referring to an ancient festival on the 21st of February, called the *Feralia*, or *Feast of the Dead*, instituted by Numa in honor of the manes, and sometimes called *Parentalia*. This authority supposes that many of the grotesque figures in the illuminated religious manuscripts, generally, but erroneously called missals, are allusive to these subjects. *The Feast of Fools*, he says, soon made its way into England, but its vestiges here are by no means so numerous as in France. The earliest mention of it is in the reign of Henry IV, and it was probably abolished about the end of the fourteenth century. Numerous imitations of it arose in various places and on different occasions. In order to wean the people from the ancient spectacles and Bacchanalian festivals, religious shows were instituted by no means free from licentiousness, Theo-

phylact, patriarch of Constantinople, about the year 990, causing the *Feast of Fools* and the *Feast of the Ass* to be exhibited in the Greek church.

The Boy Bishop.

The Boy Bishop was another pastime of the Church. In Franconia, the scholars on St. Nicholas day used to elect one of their number to play the Boy Bishop, and two others for his deacons. He was escorted to church, with his mitre on, by the other boys in solemn procession, where he presided at the worship, and afterward he and his deacons went singing from door to door and collecting money; not begging alms, but demanding it as his subsidy. This was a very ancient practice, for as early as 1274 the council of Strasburg prohibited the choosing of the Boy Bishop; though so late as the seventeenth century, it was customary at schools dedicated to Pope Gregory the Great, who was also patron of scholars, for one of the boys to be the representative of Gregory on the occasion, and act as bishop, with certain companions as his clergy.

Mystery Plays.

As Mysteries were first written by Gregory Nazianzen, it is not likely that his example as a father of the Church should be wholly lost sight of as soon as he succeeded in destroying the performance of the ancient Greek plays; yet there are no traces of sacred representations in a dramatic form until many centuries

after Gregory Nazianzen's death. In his researches into the history of music, Dr. Burney ascertained that the first dramatic representation in Italy was a spiritual comedy, performed at Padua in 1243. In 1554 were printed at Rome the statutes of a company instituted in that city in 1264, whose chief employment was to represent the sufferings of Christ in passion week. In 1298 the *Passion* was played at Friuli, and the same year the clergy of Civita Vecchia, on the feast of Pentecost and the two following holidays, performed the play of *Christ*, that is of His passion, resurrection, ascension, judgment, and the mission of the Holy Ghost, and again in 1304 they acted the creation of Adam and Eve, the annunciation of the Virgin Mary, the birth of Christ, and other subjects of sacred history.

Sir John Hawkins, in his *History of Music*, has given an account of a spectacle, invented and exhibited at Florence in the year 1310 by Pietro Cosimo, the painter, which Hawkins terms the most whimsical and at the same time the most terrifying that imagination can conceive. "Having taken a resolution to exhibit this extraordinary spectacle at the approaching carnival, Cosimo shut himself up in a great hall, and there disposed everything so secretly for the execution of his design that no one had the least suspicion of what it was about. In the evening of a certain day in the carnival season there appeared in one of the chief streets of the city a chariot painted black, with white crosses and dead men's bones, drawn by six buffaloes, and upon the end of the pole stood the figure of an angel with the attributes of Death and holding a long trumpet in his hands,

which he sounded in a shrill and mournful tone, as if to awaken and raise the dead. Upon the top of the chariot sat a figure with a scythe in his hand, representing Death, having under his feet many graves, from which appeared, half way out, the bare bones of carcasses. A great number of attendants, clothed in black and white, masked with Death's heads, marched before and behind the chariot, bearing torches, which enlightened it at distances so well chosen that everything seemed natural. There were heard, as they marched, muffled trumpets, whose hoarse and doleful sounds served as a signal for the procession to stop. Then the sepulchres were seen to open, out of which proceeded, as if by resurrection, bodies resembling skeletons, who sung in a sad and melancholy tone Italian airs suitable to the subject. While the procession stopped in the public place the musicians sung with a continued and tremulous voice the psalm *Miserere*, accompanied with instruments covered with crape, to render their sounds more dismal. The chariot was followed by many persons habited like corpses, and mounted on the leanest horses that could be found, spread with black housings, having white crosses with death's heads painted at the four corners. Each of the riders had four persons to attend, habited in shrouds like the dead, each with a torch in one hand and a standard of black taffeta, painted with white crosses, bones and death's heads in the other. In short, all that horror can imagine most affecting at the resurrection of the dead was represented at this masquerade, which was intended to represent the *Triumph of Death*."

A spectacle so sad and mournful struck dismay through Florence; and, although in a time of festivity, made penitents of some, while others admiring the ingenious manner in which everything was conducted, praised the whim of the inventor and the execution of a concert so suitable to the occasion. Appalling as this exhibition undoubtedly was, yet its terrors must have been exceeded by one in the same city, from which Hawkins supposes that Cosimo's was taken. This was the performance of the *Torments of the Damned*, at the festival of the first of May, 1304, when, according to Sismondi, the bed of the river Arno was transformed into a representation of the gulf of hell, and every variety of suffering that the imagination of monks or of the poets had invented was inflicted, by streams of boiling pitch, flames, ice and serpents, on real persons, whose cries and groans rendered the horrors of the scene complete.

Religious Plays in Italy.

As in other European countries, the origin of the Italian drama was essentially religious. Christianity found the need of replacing the heathen shows and spectacles it had suppressed, and amused the people with representations of Scriptural subjects, or of incidents in the lives of the saints. For centuries these were not written down, but improvised or exhibited in dumb show. Gradually the Miracle-play came into being, a more advanced development, the text of which must be learned by rote, with much drilling of the performers, and therefore the lines were committed to writing. In

Italy this assumed a more polished form than elsewhere, especially in the *Rappresentazione Sacra*, rude in construction, but composed frequently in elegant octave verse. This was in the fifteenth century, the earliest play of which the date is known being the *Abraham and Isaac* of Feo Belcari, in 1449. It became exceedingly popular in the latter part of the century, especially at Florence, Lorenzo de Medici being reputed as one of its authors. Numbers of such pieces were printed, down even to the end of the seventeenth century, and usually adorned with wood engravings. The materials were almost entirely drawn from ecclesiastical legend. Constantine is represented as giving his daughter to his successful general, Gallicanus, on condition of his becoming a Christian. Julian, marching to wage war with the Persians, is slain by an invisible saint. The histories of Tobit, of St. Agnes, of St. Cecilia and numbers of similar stories form the staple subjects. Sometimes romance is laid under contribution, as in the instance of the Emperor Octavian, but always with a religious motive. Dramatic force does not seem to have been much considered, the stately octave being better adapted for declamation than for dialogue; but the stage directions are very precise, and every effort seems to have been made to impress the spectators, so far as permitted by the rudeness of the open-air theatre, usually a mere scaffold with, perhaps, a curtain for the back-ground, yet often very splendidly decorated. If we can believe Menestrier, however, as quoted in Bayle's *Dictionary of Art*, Italy had more pretentious theatres, at one of which, at Veletri, as he says, Mystery plays were acted

even in the nineteenth century. They were, indeed, in the dark ages, the principal entertainments at the reception of princes.

Mysteries at Paris.

In 1313, Philip the Fair gave the most sumptuous entertainment at Paris ever remembered in that city. Edward II and his queen, Isabella, crossed over from England with a large retinue of nobility, and partook of the magnificent festivities. The pomp and profusion of the banquetings, the variety of the amusements, and the splendor of the costumes were unsurpassed. On each of the eight days the princes and nobles changed their dresses three times, while the people were sometimes entertained with representations of the *Glory of the Blessed*, at other times with the *Torments of the Damned*, and with various other spectacles, especially the *Procession of Reynard the Fox*. In 1402, by an edict of Charles VI, the Mystery of the conception, passion and resurrection of Christ was performed at St. Maur, about five miles from Paris. At the council of Constance, in the year 1417, the English fathers gave a Mystery of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents. In this play a low buffoon was introduced, desiring of his lord to be dubbed a knight, that he might be properly qualified to go on the adventure of killing the mother of the children of Bethlehem, which was treated with the most ridiculous levity. The good women of Bethlehem attacked the knight-errant with their spinning-wheels, broke his head with their distaffs, abused him as a coward and a disgrace to chivalry, and sent him

home to Herod as a recreant champion, with much ignominy.

At the entrance of the kings of France and England into Paris, on the 1st of December, 1420, the *Mystery of the Passion of Our Lord* was performed on a raised scaffolding one hundred paces in length. Within the next few years there were other notable performances at Paris, especially the one which commemorated the entrance of Henry VI of England as king of France. In 1486 the Mysteries of the nativity, passion and resurrection were performed with great magnificence at Poitiers.

In the royal library at Paris is a fine copy in vellum, with every page illuminated, of the *Mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ*. It contains a manuscript note in French, from which it appears to have been handsomely represented on the 3d of July, 1437, in the presence of many lords and ladies whose names are given. In the park, amid the plain of Veximiel, were arranged nine rows of seats, one above another, and these were all filled with titled personages. "To represent Christ was the curate of St. Victor of Metz; he was nigh dead upon the cross if he had not been assisted; but on the following day he counterfeited the resurrection, and performed his part very well. Another priest, who was chaplain of Metrange, played Judas, and was nearly dead while hanging; for his heart failed him, wherefore he was quickly unhung and carried off. Also the mouth of hell was very well done; for it opened and shut when the devils required to enter and come out, and had two large eyes of steel."

The story of the *Mystery of the Knight who gives his Wife to the Devil*, played in 1505, is of a dissipated knight reduced by his profligacy to distress and wickedness. In his misfortunes the devil appears and proposes to make him richer than ever if he will assign his wife, that the devil may have her in seven years. After some discussion the knight consents, his promise is written out, and he signs it with his blood. The seducer then stipulates that his victim shall deny his God; the knight stoutly resists for a time, but in the end the devil gains his point, and, emboldened by success, ventures to propose that the knight shall deny the Virgin Mary. This, however, being a still greater sin, he refuses to commit it with the utmost vehemence and persistence, and the devil walks off baffled. At the end of seven years, the promise being due, the devil presents it to the knight, who, considering it a debt of honor, prepares to discharge it immediately. He orders his wife to follow him to a certain spot, but on their way she sees a church, which, after obtaining her husband's permission, she enters, for the purpose of offering her devotion. While thus engaged, the Virgin Mary, recollecting the knight's unsullied allegiance to her, assumes the semblance of his wife, and in that character joins him. The moment that they both appear before the devil he perceives whom he has to deal with, and upbraids the unconscious knight for attempting to deceive him. The knight protests his ignorance and astonishment, which the Virgin corroborates by telling the devil that it was her own plan for the rescue of two souls from his power, and she orders him to give up the knight's promise. He, of

course, obeys so high an authority, and runs off in great terror. The Virgin exhorts the knight to better conduct in future, restores his wife to him, and the piece concludes.

The Acts of the Apostles.

In the reign of Francis I (1541) the performance of the *Acts of the Apostles* was proclaimed with great solemnity, and acted at Paris for many successive days before the nobility, clergy and a large assemblage in the Hotel de Flanders. The dramatis personæ were God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Virgin and Joseph, archangels, angels, the apostles and disciples, Jewish priests, emperors, philosophers, magicians, Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub, Belial the attorney-general of hell, Cerberus the porter, and a multitude of other celestial, terrestrial and infernal personages, amounting altogether to 485 characters. Though the scenes of these plays were chiefly scriptural, yet many were from apocryphal New Testament subjects, and the whole exhibition was a strange mixture of sacred and profane history. A scene in which the Spirit of God descends in a cloud upon the apostles as tongues of fire directs that "here a noise should be made to imitate thunder resounding through Paradise." In the play of *Pentecost*, Mary being in company with the eleven apostles and the disciples, altogether 111 persons, the deficiency in the number of the apostles through the treachery of Judas is supplied by Peter holding two straws, unequally cut, between his finger and thumb, from which one being drawn, the lot fell to Mathias. Scenes, of

which long extracts are given in Bayle's *Dictionary of Art*, convey some idea of similar absurdities.

Assumption of the Virgin.

Other instances might be given of the religious drama of this period, not only in France, but in Italy, Spain, Germany and England. These plays are enlivened by boldness of incident, and not infrequently by scenes and passages of remarkable tenderness and delicacy. In the *Assumption of the Virgin*, for instance, Mary, after being addressed by one of the celestial messengers sent to convey her to heaven, requests that before they take her soul, her body may be laid asleep; she gently reclines herself and dies, and virgins enter, and wrapping the body in a sheet, carry her away. Gabriel receives her soul, and while he holds it, gives directions for the funeral. At his desire an anthem of joy is sung for the blessed Assumption, and a female then comes in and says, they have stripped the body to wash it, as in charity bound to do, but such is the splendor thereof, and the brilliancy issuing from her limbs, that it is not possible for human eyes to sustain it. Here they all ascend into Paradise and carry the soul of the Virgin with them.

Creation of the World.

The following is a description, by an English army captain, of the *Creation of the World*, as performed at Lisbon, early in the nineteenth century: "On our entrance we found the theatre nearly filled with well-

dressed people, the front row of boxes full of ladies most superbly and tastefully dressed, their hair in braids and ornamented with a profusion of diamonds and artificial flowers, without caps, and upon the whole making a very brilliant appearance. The band is a good one, and the theatre is worth attending, were it on no other account than to hear it. When the curtain drew up, we saw the Eternal Father descend in a cloud with a long white beard, with a great number of lights and angels around him; he then gave orders for the creation of the world; over his head was drawn an equilateral triangle, as an emblem of the Trinity. The next scene presented the serpent tempting Eve to eat the apple, and his infernal majesty, the prince of darkness, paid the most exaggerated encomiums to her beauty, in order to engage her to eat, which as soon as he had done, and persuaded Adam to do the same, there came a most terrible storm of thunder and lightning, with a dance of infernal spirits, with the devil in the midst, dressed in black, with scarlet stockings and a gold-laced hat on his head. While the dance was performing, a voice from behind the scenes pronounced in a hoarse and solemn manner the word 'Jesus,' on which the devils immediately vanished in a cloud of smoke. After this, the Eternal Father descended in great wrath without any attendant, and called for Noah, whom we were much surprised to see thus early in the world's history. When he appeared, the Eternal Father told him he was sorry he had created such a set of ungrateful scoundrels, and that for their wickedness he intended to drown them altogether. Here Noah interceded for them, and at last

it was agreed that he should build an ark, and he was ordered to go to the king's dock-yard in Lisbon, and there he would see John Gonzalvez, the master builder, for he preferred him to either the French or English builders. The Eternal Father then reëscended into heaven, and Noah began to build his ark."

Pictorial Mysteries.

Early in the nineteenth century an improvement was made on the old-time Mystery-plays through the representation of the principal events in the life of Christ from the paintings of the great masters. Such representations, for instance, were given at Strasburg, beginning with 1816. Not a word was spoken, and there was very little gesture or other motion; but sacred tunes were played by a harmonica, concealed from view, with occasional hymns or odes, sung in parts by female voices. These, however, were merely accessory to the pictorial display, which included Guido's *Annunciation*, Domenichino's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, Rembrandt's *Offerings of the Wise Men*, Da Vinci's *Raising of the Widow's Son*, Titian's *Disciples at Emmaus*, Guido's *Last Supper*, the *Washing of the Disciples' Feet*, by Rubens, and the *Descent from the Cross*, by Raphael. The scenes were impressive, admirably copied and certainly more conducive to spiritual-mindedness than the antics and buffooneries too often witnessed on the stage. Certain it is that by viewing a copy of Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*, or one of Raphael's *Madonnas*, the spectator would be more inclined to

religious contemplation than by anything he might see in the Religious drama.

Origin of Oratorio.

As the Mystery-play was the foundation of modern tragedy, so, in Italy, it gave rise to the oratorio. In 1540 was founded at Rome, by St. Philip Neri, a brotherhood named the Priests of the Oratory, who, in order to increase their congregations, sang psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, either as solos or cantatas, reserving a portion of the performance until after the sermon, as an inducement to remain and hear it. Incidents from Scripture, such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, written in dialogue or verse, were also set to music, and by the excellence of the composition and representation quickly won repute. To this species of drama was given the name of oratorio.

At Berlin, in 1804-05, at Vienna, in 1810, and again in 1815, while the Peace Congress was in session after the downfall of Napoleon, the comedy of *David* was performed in five acts, with choruses and battle scenes. The back of the stage extended into the street, from which were admitted horses and vehicles, so that several hundred soldiers of all arms, habited as Jews and Philistines, performed their evolutions and discharged their weapons in imitation of the battles described in the *Book of Kings*. The performances were given at the principal theatre in the Austrian capital, and, apart from its anachronisms, appears to have been very impressive, for it was attended by the tzar, the king of Prussia and

other monarchs, with the representatives of many European courts.

Turning again to the origin of oratorio, we may quote Doctor Burney as our authority for the statement that its inception is found in the Mystery and Morality plays. After the founding at Rome of the order known as the Fathers of the Oratory, the rules of the brotherhood became exceedingly strict. In the *Institutions of the Oratory*, printed at Oxford in 1687, we find that corporal punishment, or scourging, was intermingled somewhat whimsically with the musical performances. "From the first of November to the feast of the Resurrection, their contemplation of celestial things shall be heightened by a concert of music; and it is also enjoined that, at certain seasons of frequent occurrence, they all whip themselves in the oratory. And the custom is, that after half an hour's mental prayer, the officers distribute whips made of small cords full of knots, put forth the children, if there be any, and carefully shutting the doors and windows, extinguish the other lights, except only a small candle so placed in a dark lanthorn upon the altar that the crucifix may appear clear and visible, but not reflecting any light, thus making all the room dark: then the priest in a loud and doleful voice, pronounceth the verse *Jube Domine benedicere*—Command thy blessing, O Lord—and going through an appointed service, comes to *Apprehendite disciplinam*—Take your discipline, etc.—at which words, taking their whips, they scourge their naked bodies during the recital of the 50th Psalm, *Miserere*, and the 129th, *De profundis*, with several prayers, at the conclusion of

which, upon a given sign, they end their whipping, and put on their clothes in the dark and in silence."

For a more detailed account of the Religious drama we will now turn to England, where we find it in all its branches and in its highest development. While many of the plays are merely translations or adaptations from the French, Italian or German, new and original features were added, and nowhere did the Mysteries and Miracles of the middle ages take a stronger hold on the people.

English Mystery and Miracle Plays.

We have no record of any religious drama in England in the Anglo-Saxon age. The germs for Church Mysteries, present in the liturgy, could scarcely have found a suitable soil for their development. The serious and subjective nature of the people was not favorable to the introduction of theatrical representations.

After the Norman conquest it was different. Indeed, the second half of the eleventh century and the whole of the twelfth formed, for the spiritual drama in France, the most decisive and fruitful epoch; and the Normans in England played the most important part in its progress. The two oldest French Mysteries extant—*Adam*, and a later play on the *Resurrection*—appear to have been both written by Normans and in England; and we may well assume that the English population heard the Mystery, in its popular phraseology, almost at the same time as they heard it in its strictly liturgical forms, or perhaps even sooner.

The first dramatic representation in England of which we have any record, took place in a school. At the beginning of the twelfth century a school at Dun-

stable, in connection with the abbey of St. Albans, was presided over by a Norman clerk named Geffrei, who was expressly brought over from the continent to take charge of it. Geffrei wrote at Dunstable the play of *St. Katherine*, which was acted by his pupils. For their costumes he asked and received the choir clothes from the sacristy of St. Albans; but a fire breaking out the night after the representation, Geffrei's dwelling was burnt, with the borrowed costumes and probably the manuscript of the play, of which nothing more is known. The author saw in this the hand of God, took holy orders, and when the abbot of St. Albans died, was made his successor.

In the second half of the twelfth century Miracle plays began to be acted in England even publicly before the whole people. A passage in the *Life of the Holy Archbishop and Martyr, Thomas*, by William Fitzstephen, shows that such representations were common in London between 1170 and 1180. In a description of the English capital, the biographer remarks: "Instead of theatrical exhibitions, instead of scenic plays, London has plays of a holier kind, representations of the miracles which the holy confessors worked, or of the sufferings in which the constancy of the martyrs was gloriously confirmed." It is hardly to be doubted that these representations took place in the Anglo-Norman tongue.

Development of the Religious Drama.

In those early times, therefore, the English people—at least those outside the church walls—were made

especially familiar with that species of the Religious drama, whose fables belonged to the cycle of the legends and pious tales, and therefore to a field which Norman epic poets largely cultivated. Works like *Adam* cannot have been represented very frequently in the twelfth century; and still less frequently, if at all, were popular dramas acted in which the Saviour himself appeared and spoke, and the story of the Passion was certainly not yet represented in real dramatic form. In a nation where the religious play was something new, and where the religious sentiment was deeply ingrained, if actors had proceeded too freely they would probably have been accused of profanation. But the English people became gradually accustomed to the spiritual drama and learned to enjoy it. Legendary subjects prepared the way for Biblical; scenes from the Old Testament for similar ones from the New; and so, finally, the most sacred portions of the story of salvation came to be represented openly; and these latter portions must have indeed aroused the keenest interest of the pious spectators.

Nothing so much interests the ordinary mind as to see what is already known brought forward in new form, or to see that which is regarded with holy awe brought into touch with ourselves. The same religious sentiment which had held the English people at first aloof from the Biblical drama, afterward made this subject the most beloved of all, and cast the dramatized legends into the shade. Thus, in the course of time, the Religious drama in England changed its contents, but still retained the name which it bore at its first pub-

lic appearance. In mediæval England the popular Religious drama is called "Miracle" without any regard to its contents. Among those Miracle plays which, according to contemporary evidence, were acted in the second half of the thirteenth century in churchyards, on village greens, and in the streets of the towns, we have probably productions of the Biblical as well as of the legendary sort.

The advance of the Religious drama in England is connected with the advancing importance of fairs, with the growth of the national wealth, the spread of trade and industry, the elevation of the burgesses, and the prosperity of the guilds. All these conditions conduced at the same time to the emancipation of the drama from the church and the clergy. The clergy as a whole, indeed, were very far from giving up their activity in things theatrical. In the second half of the thirteenth century, and even in the fourteenth, many clerics appeared masked and painted in the public Miracle plays—to the great scandal of pious souls who remembered the canonical decrees sternly forbidding such things. Neither the censure of serious judges of morality, nor the renewing and sharpening of the church statutes by popes and synods, was able completely to suppress this disorder. The greater the influence gained by acting the Biblical dramas among the masses, the less the clergy were inclined to let the means of gaining such influence be wrested entirely out of their hands by the laity. Pecuniary interests were also at stake. In the year 1378 the choir singers of St. Paul's petitioned Richard II to prevent certain uneducated and unexperi-

enced persons from carrying out their intended representation of the history of the Old Testament; they thus made paramount the interests of the cathedral clergy, who had spent large sums in preparing a public representation of the same subject for the following Christmas. Mendicant friars, Franciscans, Carmelites, also turned their attention to the popular stage. It is probable that in many places a clergyman acted as superintendent over the religious plays; and at least one side of the dramatic art must have remained, through the entire middle ages, the special province of the clergy, that is, the composition of the drama. The honest artisan or shopkeeper, who could scarcely learn his allotted part, was certainly unable to compose the text of a spiritual play.

The Chester Mysteries.

Among the oldest specimens of the Religious drama in England are the Chester Mysteries, ascribed in part to a Benedictine monk of that city, with a promise of a thousand days of pardon from the pope to all who attended the representation. These were first acted, so far as is known, in 1328, or rather they were then first produced in English. For the entertainment of the populace, various additions were made to the Biblical story. Hence arose many absurdities, as in the play of the *Flood*, which represents Noah's wife as positively refusing to enter the ark:

Noe.—Good wife, doe now, as I thee bidd.

Noe's Wife.—By Christ not I, ere I see more need.

Though thou stande all day and stare.

Noe.—Lorde! that Woman ben crabed be,
And not are meeke, I dare well saye;
That is well seene by me, to-day,

I witness of ye eich one:

Good wife, let all this be beare,
That thou makest in this place here,
For all they wene thou art master,
And soe thou arte, by Saint John.

Christ's Descent into Hell.

Among the Chester Mysteries the *Descent into Hell* was the only one not founded on Scripture, while among the Coventry Mysteries, which were produced nearly a century later, there are, besides the *Descent*, others founded on apocryphal New Testament stories. In this, the oldest English drama now extant, is treated in independent form an apocryphal subject which belongs to the Easter cycle, and appears worked up among the French Mysteries in the Resurrection play; it is *Christ's Descent to Hades*, or *The Harrowing of Hell*. The theme, which has inspired many an English poet, early and late, has more of an epic than a dramatic character. The victorious Saviour, to whom is assigned the hero's part, leaves in reality very little room for the interference of the other actors—the powers of hell—while the patriarchs and prophets awaiting the Redeemer in Hades, are necessarily doomed to passivity. The old dramatist has, besides, missed a striking effect by making these passive characters give vent to their feelings only after hell has been conquered, when the

action merely wanted its crowning effort. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and in the majority of derived descriptions, it is these very characters who begin the action. The light which goes before the Saviour and penetrates into the under-world fills their hearts with hope, and they predict the arrival of him for whom they wait. But, in throwing away this motive, the poet indeed sought and obtained an effect of another kind; his hero opens the drama, which begins before the gates of hell and afterward penetrates into the interior, and here he advances alone into the dim unknown in the greatness of his purpose.

But the kernel of this drama—very different from the traditional form—is a controversy between Christ and Satan. Satan defends himself with the statement that what one has bought is his own: "Adam came hungry to me, and as suzerain I made him do homage; he is mine and all his race for an apple which I gave him." But the Saviour replies: "Satan, mine was the apple which thou gavest him; the apple and the apple-tree were both my creation. How could you, then, dispose of goods which belonged to another? Since he has, therefore, been bought with my own, he is mine by right." Satan now gives up the point of right, betakes himself to entreaty, and appeals to the reasonableness of it: "Retain heaven and earth for thyself; leave the souls in hell to me. Let me retain what I have; what you have you may peacefully possess." "Be silent!" speaks the Lord, "for you have cast double-ace"—the lowest throw in dice—"Do you think that I have died for naught? By my death mankind is redeemed. Those

who have served me shall dwell with me in heaven. You shall suffer greater pains than anyone in this place." Satan: "None can do worse to me than I have already borne. I have suffered so great evil that it is indifferent to me where my lot fall. If you rob me of mine, I will also rob you of yours. I will go from one man to another, and draw away many from you." The Lord: "God knows, I will speak a word with you, and compel you to keep peace. I will bind you so firmly that you will rob me of few. Only the smaller devils of little power will be permitted, henceforth, to go among men, and to get possession of all those who will not resist them." The threat is at once followed by action. Christ advances on the gates of hell, the sentinel takes to flight, the gates fall down; the Lord binds Satan, who must abide in chains till the last day. And now the Saviour turns to those for whose deliverance he has come, and they welcome him with reverence and shouts of joy. Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, John the Baptist, Moses, pray in words of deepest fervor, humility, repentance, and anxious hope; the response of the Redeemer breathes love and peace.

The technics of the drama, as shown in this play, are in a very low state of development; the representation is simple, dignified, very curt, in broad outlines, somewhat angular and stiff; no overflowing pathos, although deep feeling; no fun, and no vulgarity. Whatever the poet wants to say to his hearers, he says with deep earnestness and does not fail of his effect. We say "his hearers," for hearing was, in this case, more important than seeing. This drama is an example of the species

which has not yet quite cast the shell of the liturgical period.

The Coventry Mystery of *Christ's Descent into Hell* consists of only six verses, in one of which Christ expresses his determination to release the souls "from the cindery cell." But the Chester Mystery of the same subject is a tedious paraphrase of circumstances in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, to which is added in one of the copies, by way of epilogue, the lamentation of a cheating Chester ale-wife, on being compelled to take up her abode with the devils, one of whom she endeavors to wheedle by calling him her "sweet Mr. Sir Sathanas," and from whom she receives the compliment of being called his "dear darling." The following are the verses in the Coventry play:

Nicodemus, xii. 3. In the depth of hell, in the blackness of darkness, on a sudden there appeared the color of the sun like gold, and a substantial purple-colored light, enlightening the place.

xv. 1. While all the saints of hell were rejoicing, behold Satan, the prince and captain of death, said to the prince of hell.—2. Prepare to receive Jesus of Nazareth himself, who boasted that he was the Son of God, and yet was a man afraid of death, and said, My soul is sorrowful even to death.

xvi. 19. The mighty Lord appeared in the form of a man.—20. And with his invincible power visited those who sat in the deep darkness by iniquity, and the shadow of death by sin.

xvii. 13. Then the king of glory, trampling upon death, seized the prince of hell, deprived him of all his power.

xix. 12. And taking hold of Adam by his right hand, he ascended from hell, and all the saints of God followed him.

Certainly one would prefer to sit through a performance of the Coventry rather than the Chester Mystery.

Jacob and Esau.

Almost an entire generation separates this oldest of extant English drama from the next. In *Jacob and Esau*, as the play may be styled, the dramatic art is still of a low standard; the situations are not used to advantage; the characteristics show little depth or originality. The poet is full of reverence for his subject, and dramatizes faithfully what seems to him its most important points. He writes in good verse, in simple language, but seldom exerts his powers of invention, and he evidently requires no special means of excitement to fascinate and affect an audience not spoiled by such exhibitions. But so much greater are the demands he makes on the imagination of his spectators. We are told nothing in the drama of Jacob's long residence with Laban, and the poet does not even feel the necessity of filling up the time in which the episode occurs by suggesting any other action, but simply skips the whole period. Perhaps Jacob left the stage for some minutes and returned, bringing back with him Rachel, Leah, children, and dependents. As we read the drama, one and the same monologue of Jacob begins on the journey to Haran and ends on his journey home. The poet observes closely the unity of idea, that is, Israel's election. Hence, the scenes between God and Jacob are much more important in his eyes than those describing Jacob's relation to Esau; and the

reconciliation between the two brothers, which ends the drama, makes this idea perfectly clear, at once explaining the basis on which their destinies are founded. "God reward thee, brother," says Jacob in taking his leave, "that thou hast so wished to kiss thy servant." "No, Jacob, dear brother," replies Esau, "thou art my lord by the decree of fate. Let us go together, thou and I to my father and to his wife, who loves thee, brother, as her life."

Jacob and Esau has been preserved almost in its original form, partly because the subject, being complete in itself, and without direct reference to the church feasts, did not induce later poets to undertake a revision or a new treatment. But those plays which formed the centre of the Religious drama experienced all sorts of metamorphoses, in which early forms were often replaced by later alterations. This is specially true of the Christmas and Easter plays. Both contained the germs for a rich development, which proceeded in two different directions and finally joined together the branches of the mighty trees which had grown originally from the same soil.

In the first place, the *Adoration of Christ by the Shepherds* stood in the closest relation to the *Birth of Christ*, the nucleus of the Christmas plays; but to the shepherds in St. Luke's Gospel are added the three kings in St. Matthew, and in connection with them appear the *Flight to Egypt* and the *Slaughter of the Innocents at Bethlehem*. From St. Luke, again, was taken the *Purification of Mary*, which, indeed, caused great difficulties to bring it into the proper chain of events.

The Christmas cycle of the liturgical Mysteries embraced from the first two principal groups. The one, proceeding from the Gospels, and partly also from the Apocrypha, had for its central point the birth of Christ. The other had for its nucleus the long line of prophets, and its text also was drawn from an old portion of the Christmas service and from a sermon long attributed to St. Augustine, from which, in time, several old Testament dramas were detached and gained a more or less independent existence. An important outgrowth from this group is seen in the Anglo-Norman Mystery of *Adam*. Thus the principal point with the English dramatists was the developing of the two parts, each separately, and then joining them together, and here they evidently did not know what to make of the original nucleus of the one part, viz.: predictions of the prophets; wherever these appear in later English Mysteries they seem like pieces out of the liturgy which the living organism of the freer religious drama was unable to assimilate.

The Easter plays also formed themselves into a richly but more simply developed whole. The entire history of the Passion in all its separate points—the conspiracy, the last supper, the arresting, the trial, the scourging, crucifixion, and even the descent into hell—preceded the resurrection; and the subsequent manifestation and the conversion of the unbelieving Thomas followed; the ascension, probably even in the earlier versions, formed the termination.

The Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle now converged; a few intermediate incidents, as the baptism of

Christ or the raising of Lazarus, were inserted, and by putting the last judgment at the end, the whole course of sacred history was thus included, though doubtless with omissions.

Corpus Christi Plays.

An important step toward joining the Christmas and Easter cycles was the institution of Corpus Christi day, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, coming thus in June. It is the feast of Transubstantiation, and began to be generally observed early in the fourteenth century. Such a celebration, which referred to the very core of all their worship, brought together under the open sky and in the finest season of the year a whole population, lay and clerical, presented a long procession, pompous and imposing, with its beautifully ornamented altars and stages, and was made still more striking by its figurative representations and tableaux vivants from sacred history. That season was specially appropriate for introducing a play intended as an exposition of the historic basis of their faith from beginning to end. It was, therefore, to be expected that the English Mysteries should have usually developed into Corpus Christi rather than into Chester Whitsuntide plays.

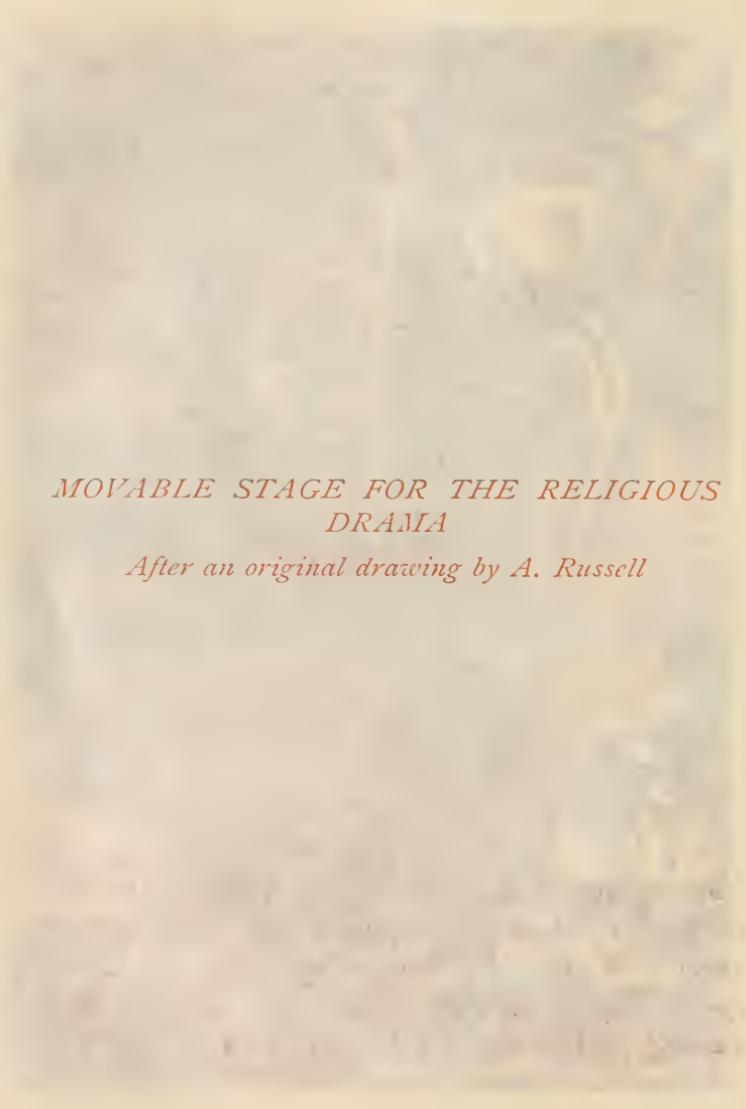
The trade corporations—each, as a rule, with its own festival, which it was in the habit of celebrating by dramatic representations—were now confronted with a general festival which had to be celebrated in common. And as all the guilds were represented in the procession of Corpus Christi day, it soon became a

point of honor with each to take part in the great festival, by arranging a certain portion, making, as it were, a smaller play within the greater, and having it acted by members of the guild. Where this was not possible several guilds or trades shared in one of these minor plays, the choice or allotment depending for the most part on purely external circumstances—such as regard for the *mise en scene*. Thus the play of the *Three Kings* was assigned to the goldsmiths, because of the crowns that had to be made; carpenters and seamen were almost indispensable for the construction and equipment of Noah's ark; smiths were valuable at the play of the *Crucifixion*. That which depended originally on free choice, mutual agreement or accident, or which was arranged on the advice of the clergy, came afterward under the control of the guild office and formed a precedent and a duty. Then, indeed, what was at first considered as an honor and a pleasure became a burden. Certain of the guilds, assigning various reasons, refused to take part in the play, and while some undertook more than one, others declined to participate, offering instead a money payment.

The collective Mystery plays were of necessity composed, from the very beginning, out of a multitude of small plays, differing in importance, but each in itself independent. Being the work of different poets, and often belonging to different epochs, these plays showed the greatest variety of treatment, tone, style and metrical form. Sometimes a play has little reference to the one preceding it. Things which the spectator has seen played before his eyes are repeated to him again in a



In the miserable stage erected for a Religious Drama the highest floor is for the Deity, surrounded by his angels; on the second floor earthly scenes are acted by the players, and the third is for hell and the damned, with an orthodox devil on guard..



*MOVABLE STAGE FOR THE RELIGIOUS
DRAMA*

After an original drawing by A. Russell

long discursive introductory monologue and the details are often full of inequalities and contradictions. Under the circumstances, a piece originally independent was easily worked up by a dramatist for his own particular cycle. When a guild took into its own play the play of a neighboring guild the actions of both were generally grouped into one, or welded together.

In the rendering of the play the guilds took even more pride than in its subject matter or its mounting. It was not only a question of costume and outfit, but also of action and speech; not only whether Noah's ark, when finished and filled with all its animals, produced an illusion, but also whether, in constructing the ark, Noah showed himself a skillful carpenter; whether the crew of the ark, during the flood, conducted themselves as real sailors or merely as land-lubbers. The smiths, or whatever craftsmen performed at the play of the *Crucifixion*, made it a point of honor to affix the Saviour on the cross in a workmanlike manner, and thus the details of their trade, with all its difficulties and accidents, come to a severe trial on such occasions, making the dialogue entirely subordinate. And here the influence of the actors is seen upon the writer, who, to please them, sometimes inserts in a prominent position what is merely incidental, and at great length places the trite and vulgar side by side with the noble and unique.

Stages.

In towns the stage was movable; the scaffolding of the theatre was wheeled about from street to street,

and halted in due order before the houses of the magnates for the production of the play; in the country, on the other hand, it was the audience that moved, and a long series of immovable scaffoldings remained fixed in one place. In the towns the route of the theatre cars moving through the streets showed the way the Corpus Christi procession had gone; in the country, the row of stage scaffolding indicated, either by their fixed position or their order, the altars and stations which the procession had passed, or at which it had stopped. But in both cases a portion of the street or green, between the scaffolding and the spectators, was reserved for the stage, though perhaps the actors sometimes found it difficult to keep this space or proscenium clear from the curious and thronging masses.

The stage was spread out in breadth for single pieces as well as for the whole play—for the age had little idea of perspective. In many cases the chief stage of a play had two or more subordinate stages beside it, and the free space between these left room for movement from one to the other. The spectators could then see the *dramatis personæ* disengaged, and could observe them in all their goings. This was decidedly unfavorable for artistic illusion. The imagination of the spectator had sometimes to give a considerable extension to the space actually before his eyes. Time is measured by the space traversed by the *dramatis personæ*, and the precedent established in *Jacob and Esau* occurs again and again, though rarely to the same extent. Such freedom in the manipulation of space and time is not favorable to the development of a finished form of

art; on the other hand, it allows the dramatist to say everything that is in his mind.

But how remarkable is the contrast between this idealistic nature of the stage as a whole and that timorous realism with which individual subjects are presented—almost in a plastic form. Even if the costumes and equipment were traditional, typical, symbolical; even if Christ, the Virgin and the apostles appeared in dresses, the cut and color of which were taken from the plastic art of the age; even if the pillar was gilt to which the Redeemer was bound during the scourging—all these were deviations from the historic truth of which an audience in the fourteenth or fifteenth century could not possibly be conscious. On the whole, the impression produced by the stage was somewhat similar to that made by looking at old maps, where towns, mountains, clumps of trees, animals, are painted large and draw our eye, and are out of all reasonable proportion to the plain country around them and the foreshortened distance.

For pageants the stage and its setting were much more elaborate than for the Religious drama proper. Of one held in 1546, at the crowning of Edward VI, there is a discription extant which reminds us somewhat of the preparations made for the coronation of the reigning sovereign of Britain. As the king passed along Cheapside on his way to Westminster, he came to a double scaffold at the end of the great conduit, which ran wine and was richly garnished. Near it stood four children, representing Grace, Nature, Fortune and Charity, all of whom made speeches, and there

were eight ladies handsomely apparelled, personating Wisdom and the seven Liberal Sciences. The scaffold was hung with cloth and silk, the upper portion containing a heaven with sun and stars and clouds that spread abroad, letting down a lesser cloud of white sarcenet fringed with silk, powdered with stars and beams of gold, from which a phoenix descended to a mount of sweet shrubs on the lower scaffold. Here a crowned and golden lion made motions of amity. On the nether scaffold, a child, arrayed in regal garments, was seated on a throne, representing the king, and was supported by children personating Royalty, Justice, Truth and Mercy, all making speeches, as did the ladies. Beside the throne was the golden fleece, guarded by two bulls and a serpent, their mouths breathing forth flames. A smaller conduit in Cheapside was richly hung and ornamented, with an old man crowned, sceptred and arrayed as Edward the Confessor, and on a stage at its foot was St. George, the patron saint of England, in complete armor. But with all this mediæval flummery we need not further concern ourselves.

IV.

Further Development of Religious Drama.

The Religious drama, and the whole Mystery cycle, spread over all England and beyond it—as Dublin testifies. But the soil and atmosphere of every place was not equally propitious to the development of this art. It thrived much better in the northeast than in the southwest of England; better in the districts originally settled by the Angles than in districts settled by the Saxons; better in those parts where the homilies on the Scriptures and the Biblical poetry of a high cast were native from early times, than where saintly legends attained their highest cultivation and cyclic development. We have very scanty information about the fate of the English drama in its first narrow home. Some towns, especially in the East-Anglian districts, preserve the recollection of theatrical representations of religious plays; we know in particular that at Wymondham, near Norwich, such plays were usually acted every year. From Norwich itself we have still extant a play of the grocers—on the *Creation of Eve and the Fall*—in two manuscripts of the sixteenth century, and many chapters might be written of others in various shires

and parishes; but our remaining notices must be of the briefest.

Abraham and Isaac.

Only a single remnant of the East-Midland dramaturgy in the heyday of the Mysteries is preserved, and this may have been acted either by itself or as part of a cycle. It is the play of *Abraham and Isaac*, written in Suffolk. In its present form the drama belongs to the fifteenth century, but it can be shown that there was an older copy, belonging to the fourteenth. Compared with *The Harrowing of Hell*, and even with *Jacob and Esau*, *Abraham and Isaac* shows decided progress. The poet moves more freely, has some idea of painting characters and situations, and according to his ability, he makes the most of his pathetic subject—which is one of the few themes of a dramatic nature treated at that period. He gives us at least a glance at the relation between father and son, just before the father receives the terrible command to sacrifice his only child.

Abraham receives the command itself with too much coolness and resignation—a traditional error which arises from reverence for the subject. He speaks like a moral preacher, not like a father. But when he begins to make his preparations for the execution of the horrid deed, his suppressed feelings begin to assert themselves, and the internal conflict grows more violent as the development proceeds, although—considering the nature of the hero and the views of the poet—the solution cannot appear doubtful for a single moment.

The childlike innocence of Isaac is beautifully set forth, and in a way that must have touched the father's heart, and that still greatly moves the spectator. When they arrive at the fatal spot the boy speaks kindly and cheerfully to his father; but Abraham's dejected look rouses his astonishment, and when he sees no animal for sacrifice a foreboding of the terrible design first strikes him. Abraham seeks in vain to quiet him by referring to God, who will provide an animal for sacrifice. But Isaac replies:

Isaac.—Yes, father, but my heart begins to quake to see that sharp sword in your hand. Why do you bear the sword drawn so? I wonder greatly at your looks.

Abraham.—Oh! Father of Heaven, I am so full of woe, this child breaks my heart in two.

Isaac.—Indeed, father, you must have something in your mind that grieves you ever more and more.

Abraham.—Oh! God of Heaven, send me thy grace, for my heart was never half so sore.

Isaac.—I pray you, father, let me know whether I am to suffer any harm or no.

Abraham.—Believe me, sweet son, I may not tell thee yet; my heart is now full of woe.

Isaac.—I pray you, dear father, hide it not from me, but tell me something of what you have in mind.

Abraham.—Oh! Isaac, Isaac, I must kill thee!

Isaac.—Kill me! father, alas! what have I done? If I have in aught trespassed against you, you may make me full mild with a rod; but with your sharp sword kill me not, for I am only but a child, father.

Abraham.—I am full sorry, my son, to shed thy blood; but truly, my child, I have no choice.

Isaac.—Now I would to God my mother were here on this hill; she would kneel for me on both her knees to save my

life. And since my mother is not here, I pray you, father, change your looks, and kill me not with your sharp knife.

Abraham now tells him God's command. As soon as Isaac understands the idea, that the will of God requires the sacrifice, he yields to his fate. He prays no more for his life, he murmurs not at his destiny; but, in this meek resignation his ingenious prattle is now quite overpowering. He first wishes his father to conceal his death from his mother, and then again requests him to convey to her his last farewell. He is afraid of the sword, and prays Abraham to put a cloth over his eyes, that he may not see it. On the other hand he is unwilling to await the stroke with his hands bound. He prays for his father's blessing, and asks forgiveness for everything in which he may have offended him. Every word cuts Abraham's heart to the quick, and lets loose in him a new tempest of emotions. And thus there are delaying motives which always keep coming up again and again, and always fresh means for lengthening out, with a touching fascination, the terrible scene on which the interest of this drama depends. None of the other Middle-English dramas on this subject have given to this scene such richness of motives and variations. At first it is Isaac who appears to stay the progress of the action, then again Abraham, whom his son beseeches more than once to make an end. There is, indeed, action and reaction throughout between the participants; the crisis is thus prolonged and the spectators are held in breathless suspense.

The happy issue is related quite as finely as the pain-

ful crisis. The angel that brought Abraham the joyful message has departed. The patriarch praises God for His grace, and orders his son to arise. But Isaac is still expecting the fatal stroke. When he understands from his father that God has granted him his life, the joy of his heart breaks forth; but doubt and fear have not yet quite left him; in the conflict of his feelings he requires repeated assurances that the danger is over. And how naive and touching are the words he addresses to the ram which is to die in his stead:

"Oh! sheep, sheep! Blessed mayst thou be, that ever thou wert sent down hither."

Or the words he speaks when stirring the fire:

"But father, when I stoop down low! you will not kill me with your sword, I trow."

"No fears, sweet son; have no dread, my mourning is past."

"Yes! but I would that sword were in a sheath, for certainly, father, it makes me full aghast."

The poet has thoroughly seized the contrast between the severely tragic elements of the situation and the naive charm of the tender, childlike sentiments, and has presented it lovingly and with the finest perception. But his style and metre are very far from the height of what seems to be his ambition.

The Religious drama was developed with great vigor and individuality in Northumbria—especially in Yorkshire. Towns like York, Leeds, Beverly, here formed

centres for the art of the cyclic plays, which were represented yearly.

The Towneley Mysteries

The country fair, held once a year at Woodkirk, in the neighborhood of Wakefield, seems to have been chosen by the guilds of Wakefield and other neighboring districts for acting those Corpus Christi plays which have become famous under the name of the Towneley Mysteries. The manuscript, which is said to have formerly belonged to Woodkirk abbey, and was afterward for a long time in possession of the Towneley family, whose name it bears, dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century; it contains thirty or thirty-one plays, and its cycle is the result of the development of the entire fourteenth century. The general impression it produces is as if made up of a number of instantaneous pictures, which confirm the different phases of its consecutive historic growth. We have in *Jacob and Esau* a pre-cyclic drama almost in its unaltered form; but the *Descent to Hell*, which gives to the subject a new treatment and comes nearer to the Latin source, is worked out in an entirely independent way. The central drama, which has for its subjects the conspiracy of the Jews, the Lord's supper and the seizure of Christ, is a good example of the blending into one of two or more plays originally independent; and vice versa the play of *St. Thomas* is recognizable as an independent new formation of an action which appeared at first merely as an episode.

On the whole, the drama of the North utilized in its

own way all outside influences and assimilated them. The Corpus Christi plays of Woodkirk, with few exceptions, bear a decidedly Yorkshire stamp; many of them remind us still more of the motley crowds, mostly of rustics, who attended that fair. They contain a peculiar mixture of roughness and gentleness, rudeness and tenderness. The treatment of the favorite theme of Abraham's sacrifice is highly characteristic, when we compare it with the Brome drama. The Yorkshire Isaac is by no means such a virtuous hero as the East-Anglian; he never for a moment thinks of declaring himself ready to die; on the contrary, he fights boldly to the last for his young life, though only in childish words. Abraham, indeed, does not tell him that it was a question of God's command. For what use would it have been? The patriarch violently suppresses his feelings, and, having once determined to do the unavoidable, he seeks to have it over as soon as possible. He goes so far as to deceive Isaac when ascending the mountain: "We shall rejoice and be glad when this affair is finished." When on the top of the mountain Isaac asks unsuspectingly the well-known question, and Abraham answers, "Now, son, I cannot longer deceive you; you were always obedient to me—always did as I wished; yet, in sooth, you must die, if my wish be fulfilled." The conflict between father and son, and the conflict of the father's heart, now begin. There is nothing of the fine speeches, of the elegant coquetry which runs out to such a length in the East-Anglian piece.

A popular humor and a coarse, comic vein seem to

belong naturally to those who produced the Towneley Mysteries. The characters and situations in which these qualities are generally seen are indeed typical in the old drama. Pharaoh, Cæsar, Augustus, Herod, Pilate are horrid tyrants, inhuman madmen, braggadocios and bullies; Noah is an honest, God-fearing man, who has great difficulty in managing his stubborn wife; Cain is a coarse, selfish peasant; and so all the other types after their kind. The means by which the risibility of the public is to be excited are generally of the same coarse nature—rude, obscene jokes, curses, abuse, scolding and cudgeling. But by these means the Woodkirk dramatists make not only a very rich effect, but often a much more striking application than their colleagues in the South and West. They lay on the color more strongly, risk bolder and more striking combinations; frequently they give more powerful motives, and above all they sometimes make real, life-like figures.

Cain.

A perfectly successful, though highly disagreeable figure, is the *Cain* of the Towneley Mysteries. He is a Yorkshire peasant, malicious and niggardly, higgling with God about every sheaf in the sacrifice, and animated with the desire of cheating God, if possible. He has, besides, a surly, easily irritated disposition, and a clownish rudeness; he is a master at reviling, cursing, ribaldry, and likes to show his cleverness on the smallest excuse, or sometimes, indeed, without any excuse at all. A grim, sarcastic humor lends to these qualities the

proper relish, and in this mood he spares God just as little as he does the righteous Abel. The development of this character, whose comic side has irresistibly attracted poets and spectators alike, has prevented the terrible tragedy of the action from fully attaining its proper due.

The Deluge.

The domestic scenes between Noah and his quarrelsome spouse are very forcibly set forth in the Woodkirk play of *The Deluge*. The obstinacy of Mrs. Noah borders on the incredible—neither threats nor persuasions, nor the sight even of the approaching flood, can induce her to enter the ark. She sits on a hill spinning, and will not move from the spot till she coolly spins out her task. Not till the water is lapping at her feet will she go on board. Noah, however, is not represented here as so patient as in other places. He gives his better half what she deserves—a sound thrashing; she does not ask for his pardon, but defends herself as well as she can, and so we have a free fight, in which Noah is knocked down by his wife and calls out, “Wife, let us cease; my back is almost broken.” “And I am beaten black and blue,” says she, “so that I know not what to do.” Their sons interfere and put an end to the scene.

Downright wickedness and mad rage characterize the conduct of Caiaphas in the play of *Smiting on the Face*. The torrent of abuse and curses which he pours forth against the Saviour is simply boundless, and it is with the greatest difficulty that Annas restrains him

from continuing in his mad fit and from falling with his own hands upon the defenseless sufferer.

A Woodkirk dramatist has introduced into a play on the *Last Judgment* some really original scenes about the devils. These scenes satirize all ranks in the most grotesque and vivid manner, and produce a much greater effect than the most eloquent preacher could have done with the same subject. This is especially true of the passage spoken by the young infernal humorist, Tutivillus, the cleverest of all the devils.

The Shepherds.

The rustic Yorkshire humor is shown in its brightest side in the play of the *Shepherds*. This part of the Christmas Mysteries had previously received considerable attention in the French drama, the effect of which upon the English was probably greater than would appear from the text that has been preserved. But just here the powers of assimilation, and, at the same time, the creative talent of the English poets, are most clearly seen. And in this respect the Towneley collection again bears the palm. It contains two different Shepherd plays, variations of the same type, in the same metre and style, but of very different character.

In the first piece the secular action does not deserve the name of a dramatic plot; it is occupied only with the mentioning of circumstances and events which might occur every day. The first two shepherds fall into a quarrel about the emperor's beard. The third,

on arriving, good-humoredly establishes peace between them, and he tells of the good condition of the cattle feeding up to their knees in grass. They sit down to a rustic meal, for which each produces his quota and which turns out liberal enough. The beer jug passes round and inspires them to sing. At the end they put the remains of the banquet in a basket for the poor and go to sleep; the third shepherd not forgetting to cross himself against the influence of elves. The voice of the angel soon wakes them from their rest.

The second play is in the nature of a farce, and though inserted into the Biblical drama, is completely detached, and seems to be there only for its own sake. The sheep-stealer Mak, who shows a certain relationship to Shakespeare's Autolycus, associates with the shepherds and robs them, while sleeping on the plain, of a fat ram, which he quickly carries home to his wife, and then returns to lie down with the other sleepers. When the sheep is missed on the following morning, and the owners knock at Mak's door in the hope of finding the lost ram in his house, they meet with a strange reception. Mrs. Mak, they are told, has been delivered of a child; her fine, young boy is in the cradle, and they must therefore keep very quiet. They insist, however, on searching the house and yard, and have therefore to listen to much abuse from the improvised mother. The search is in vain. At length the cradle attracts their attention; they wish to see the child. "Let it alone," says Mak; "it's sleeping; if you awake it, it will cry. I pray you, go away." One of the shepherds then goes to kiss the child. "What the devil is

this? it has a long snout!" But even after they have seen the horns of the ram and a known mark on its ear, Mak and his spouse still protest their innocence. "It was bewitched by an elf," says the mother. "I saw it with my own eyes. As the clock struck twelve it was thus misshapen." The shepherds determine at first to bring the thievish pair before the judge, but finally decide to pardon them. Exhausted with the exertions of their search, they go to sleep, and now Christmas begins.

York Mysteries.

If we go from Woodkirk to York, the contrast between town and country becomes very striking. We see, indeed, the same kind of people, with the same original tendencies, but these appear somewhat refined; certain rustic excrescences, too gnarled and knotty, are laid aside, and, in other respects, the Towneley Mysteries appear in more attractive form.

The Corpus Christi plays of York have much in common with those of Woodkirk. Five pieces—the *Departure of the Israelites*, *Christ in the Temple*, the *Descent to Hell*, the *Resurrection* and the *Last Judgment*—are almost identical in the two collections, and whenever any deviations occur the York collection generally contains the earlier form. There is also a close affinity in the design and treatment of a large number of the York and Woodkirk plays, and even verbal resemblances sometimes occur. The York Mysteries, as a whole, give evidence of that manly character, that strong realism, that mixture of roughness and tender-

ness, that coarse-grained humor, which we have seen in the Towneley plays as the typical expression of the North English people.

At the trial of Christ before the high priest, Annas and Caiaphas have, as it were, changed parts; yet the York Annas is very far from displaying that spiteful wickedness which astonished us in the Woodkirk Caiaphas. The York Mystery shows a certain moderation, and tries to keep closely to its subject. But it is by no means insipid; it is full of life, full of dramatic action, and excellently suited to satisfy the outer as well as the inner sense of a great population fond of spectacles and eager for all kinds of excitement. Vividly dramatic is *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*—a subject which must have especially attracted the inhabitants of a large town. The history of the *Passion* has in particular received a rich and vigorous finish, and many figures and episodes are interwoven with the main action, of which the tremendous pathos is effectively heightened by humorous and coarse realistic accessories.

Examples of excellent characterizations are not rare in the York collection. Among others the character of Joseph in contrast with Mary is well kept up, although there is sometimes a difference of conception observable in the different plays. In the play of *Jesus in the Temple*, the shyness of Joseph, an uneducated peasant, in appearing before learned people, and the desire to let his more highly-educated wife speak instead of himself, is taken from real life, as is, also, in a previous passage, the comparative placidity of the foster-father in contrast to the anxiety of the mother about their lost

son. This latter contrast appears heightened, and also differently conceived, in the *Flight to Egypt*. Here Mary is the all-loving, anxious mother, the weak woman, almost losing her senses in her care for what is dearest to her; Joseph on the other hand is the active, faithful, helpful husband. In the charming play of *Christ's Birth* this relation is quite changed. It is here the good-natured Joseph who is careful and anxious about the storm and the rain, the cold and the darkness; while the holy Virgin, full of trust in God, and happy in the grace accorded her, has heart and mind fixed only on the great and wondrous miracle which she bears within her. Joseph leaves her alone in the stable to go for fire and light. Mary commends herself to the divine protection, and then gives herself up to her joyful hope, until painlessly her child is born. She worships it, and with a timorous devotion takes it in her arms. All this is presented with the tenderest and most touching grace, and what follows is kept at the same high pitch. On his return home we hear Joseph, weak from age, complaining of the bitter cold. Suddenly a bright light shines upon him, which fills him with astonishment. On entering the stable he perceives the child upon its mother's breast, and lovingly they both praise and worship it. The divine babe is laid in a manger, and the silent worship of the animals that try carefully to warm the tender being completes the picture.

By the religious guild, or fraternity, of Corpus Christi at York a play was annually performed that must have been, in its time, one of the most extraordinary

entertainments of the age, doubtless drawing a vast concourse of people from the surrounding country. Every trade in the city, from the highest to the lowest, was obliged to furnish out a pageant at its own expense on this occasion. The subjects were from the history of the Old and New Testaments, each guild representing some particular part, and speaking suitable verses. Judging from the ordinances for their regulation, as still preserved in the city's registers, the performances were apt to be of a somewhat turbulent character. No man is to go armed, "to the disturbance of the peace and the play, and the hindering of the procession," under pain of imprisonment and the forfeiture of the weapons. The craftsmen must bring forth their pageants in due order, with good actors properly arrayed, under penalty of one hundred shillings, every player to be ready between four and five in the morning. And says the final clause: "Father William de Melton, Professor of Holy Pageantry, and a most famous preacher of the word of God, having exhorted the populace that they would cause to be removed all public concubines, wherefore the mayor, by consent of the community, ordains that they should depart the city on pain of imprisonment, unless any of them should find good security that she would not exercise her illegal vocation for the future."

At this celebration, which was in 1415, fifty-four pageants are mentioned by the town-clerk. First was, "God the Father Almighty, creating and forming the heavens, angels, archangels, Lucifer, and the angels that fell with him into hell;" the tanners performed

this; the next was, "God the Father in his own substance, creating the earth, and all which is herein, in the space of five days," represented by the plasterers.

The third, "God the Father creating Adam of the slime of the earth, and making Eve of the rib, and inspiring them with the spirit of life," was played by the card-makers. The last, "Jesus, Mary, twelve apostles, four angels with trumpets, and four with a lance with two scourges, four good and four bad spirits, and six devils," was performed by the mercers. The town-clerk's entry also mentions the torches and torch-bearers in the procession: "Porters, eight torches; coblers, four torches; cordwainers, fourteen torches," and so forth. "And it is ordained that the porters and coblers should go first, then the weavers and cordwainers," the procession concluding with the councilmen and mayor.

Like the Woodkirk cycle, that of York also affords a great variety of forms of style and rhythm, but we do not meet with such old forms in the latter as in the former; the York cycle has also fewer cases indicating tampering or interpolation by a mixture of different metres in the same play. A remarkable feature in the collection is the frequent occurrence of strophes, of which the opening song has terminal rhymes and consists of alliterative long lines. The majority of the plays referring to the Passion are written in this form, which is also found in other places.

The fraternity of Corpus Christi at York was extremely popular. Several hundreds of persons were annually admitted, and it was supported chiefly by the

annual collection made at the procession. Instituted about 1250, the religious ceremony of the play and procession was so much esteemed as a piece of sacred pageantry that it continued to be acted in that city far into the reign of Queen Elizabeth. What has been said of the Mysteries at York will suffice to convey some notion of the general method of representing them in other cities, and there is little doubt that the corporations strove to outvie each other in the elaboration and splendor of their exhibitions.

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

Corpus Christi day at Newcastle-upon-Tyne was celebrated with similar exhibitions by the incorporated trades. The earliest mention of the performance of Mysteries there is in the ordinary of the coopers for 1426; in 1437 the barbers played the *Baptizing of Christ*; by the ordinary of the goldsmiths, plumbers, glaziers, pewterers and painters, dated 1436, they were commanded to play at their feast the *Three Kings of Coleyn*. In the books of the fullers and dyers one of the charges for the play of 1564 is, "Item for three yards of cloth with lining for the coat of Goddes, 3s. 2d." From the ordinary of different trades it seems that about 1578 the Corpus Christi plays were on the decline, and never acted but by special command of the magistrates of Newcastle. The only vestige that remains of the Newcastle Mysteries is a portion of *Noah's Ark*, wherein God, an angel, Noah and his wife and the devil are the characters. In this, as well as the

Chester Mystery of the same subject, the wife of Noah is a vixen; the last words she says to him are:

The devil of hell thee speed
To ship when thou shalt go.

It appears from the earl of Northumberland's *Household Book*, 1512, that the children of his chapel performed mysteries during twelve days at Christmas, and at Easter, under the direction of the master of the revels. Bishop Percy cites several particulars of the regulated sums, payable to "parsones" and others, for these performances. The exhibiting of Scripture dramas on the great festivals formed part of the domestic regulations of the ancient nobility; and what is more remarkable, it was as much the business of the chaplain to compose plays for the family as it was to perform the offices of religion.

Cornwall.

In Cornwall, interludes from Scripture history were played in the Cornish language. These were called the Guary Miracle plays, and sometimes performed in the open fields, at the bottom of earthen amphitheatres, the people standing around on the inclined plane, which was usually forty or fifty feet in diameter. The players did not learn their parts, but were followed by a prompter, called the ordinary, with the book in his hand. Long after the Mysteries had ceased elsewhere, and the regular stage had been established, they were exhibited in Cornwall to the country people, who

flocked from all sides to hear and see the devils and devices that were provided to delight the eye as well as the ear. Two manuscripts in the Bodleian library contain the Cornish plays of the *Deluge*, the *Passion*, and the *Resurrection*.

According to Strutt, when Mysteries were the only plays, the stage consisted of three platforms, one above another. On the uppermost sat God the Father, surrounded by his angels; on the second the glorified saints, and on the last and lowest, men who had not yet passed from this life. On one side of the lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark, pitchy cavern, from whence issued the appearance of fire and flames; and when it was necessary the audience was treated with hideous yellings and noises in imitation of the howlings and cries of wretched souls, tormented by relentless demons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended to delight and to instruct the spectators. The following is a brief description of hell by an old author who had probably seen it exhibited on the ecclesiastical stage:

An hideous hole all vaste, withouten shape,
Of endless depth, orewhelm'd with ragged stone,
With ougly mouth and griesly jawes doth gape,
And to our sight confounds itselfe in one.

The Mysteries were usually acted in churches or chapels upon temporary scaffolds. When enough performers could not be found among the clergy, the church wardens employed secular players, and some-

times borrowed or hired dresses and other necessary paraphernalia from neighboring parishes.

Coventry Mysteries.

Plays similar to those enacted at York were presented throughout the midland counties, but the fame of all was eclipsed by the Coventry Mysteries, which, in the fifteenth century, drew audiences from far and near, including several monarchs and many of the nobility. The Cotton collection, now in the British Museum, contains a manuscript, belonging for the most part to 1468, which contains a whole cycle of Mysteries, and in spite of occasional doubts this has always been considered as a contribution from the Franciscans. Inside the larger groups there is often a smaller cycle of plays, each with its own prologue and epilogue. Thus at the beginning of the story of *Christ's Trial and Passion*, we learn that the first part—the *Entrance into Jerusalem*, *Last Supper*, *Betrayal*, and *Arrest*—had been performed in the preceding year. In contrast with the Chester cycle, which shows the smoothing hand of an editor, the Coventry plays seem to be the product of a purely external agency, which at times has placed the most heterogeneous elements side by side, almost without consideration. In both there is evident a strong didactic and moralizing tendency, but in the Coventry groups this is united, in much larger degree, with the epic and lyrical tendencies of the Chaucer school. There is also a considerable difference in the introduction and treatment of materials, especially as to the legends of

the Virgin, as in the *Gospel of the Virgin's Birth* and the *Trial of Joseph and Mary*, while in the pageant of the *Resurrection* Christ first reappears to his mother. The devil is also an important figure in the Coventry Mysteries, his importance and popularity increasing toward the end of the middle ages; so that he no longer confines himself to pageants, where alone his presence is required.

Upon the whole, it would seem that the Coventry Mysteries belong to a period when the religious drama had begun to lose much of its freshness and simplicity. Instead of the saucy humor of former days, we have only a grave, insipid narrative, even Noah's wife having changed her character and lost her old attractiveness. Nor do we find compensation in a number of broad jokes or the coarse treatment of extremely delicate subjects.

Yet in the Coventry Mysteries there are not wanting passages of strong dramatic force, with many touching scenes and attractive motives. A deep impression is sometimes produced by keeping close to tradition, and at times the diction rises to real pathos, especially in the story of the Passion, as in the episode of *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*:

O my sone! my sone! my derlyng dere!
 What have I offendyd the?
 Thou hast spoke to alle tho that ben here
 And not a word thou spekyst to me!

To the Jewys thou art ful kende,
 Thou hast forgive al [their] mysdedes;

And the thef thou hast in mende,
For onys harkyng mercy before he is mede.

A! my sovereign Lord, why wilt thou not speke
To me that am thy modyr in peyn for thi wrong!
A! hert! hert! why wilt thou not breke
That I were out of this sorroe so stronge!

Jesus commends his mother to the beloved disciple, and offers her consolation. With the most violent affection Mary falls upon the cross, embracing it. Everybody tries to quiet her and to take her away, Mary Magdalene reminding her that the sufferings of Jesus can only be increased by the sight of her own. But the distracted mother answers: "I pray you all, leave me here and hang me on this wood beside my dear son; for where he is there is my place."

Joseph and Mary.

"The Pageant of the Company of Sheremen and Taylors in Coventry, as performed by them on the Festival of Corpus Christi," is a manuscript belonging to the corporation of Coventry, bearing the following inscription: "Thys matter newly correcte, be Robart Croo the xiiij day of Marche, fenysschid in the yere of owre lord god mcccc & xxxiiij." Its events are from the Annunciation to the murder of the Innocents. Isaiah speaks the prologue and prophesies the incarnation. Joseph's jealousy being the subject of a conspicuous scene, a portion is extracted from the original without translation into modern English.

Joseph, perceiving the Virgin's pregnancy, taxes her with inconstancy in his absence, and inquires who had been with her. She asserts her innocence, and affirms that she had no one but the heavenly messenger.

Josoff.—Sey not soo, womon, for shame ley be,
 Ye be with chyld, soo wondurs grett,
 Ye nede no more th'r of to tret
 Agense all right;
 Forsothe thys chylde, dame, ys not myne,
 Alas! that eyv with myn yne,
 I suld see this syght.
 Tell me, womon, whose ys this chyld?

Mare.—None but youris, husebond soo myld,
 And thatt shalbe seyne.

Josoff.—But myne, alas! alas! why sey ye soo,
 Wele away, womon; now may I goo
 Begyld, as many a nothur ys.

Mare.—Na, truly sir, ye be not begylde,
 Nor yet, with spott of syn, I am no defylde;
 Trust yt well, husebonde.

Josoff.—Husebond! in feythe, and that acold!
 A waylle away, Josoff! as throw ur' olde,
 Lyke a fole, now ma I stand and truse.
 But in seyth, Mare, th'u art in syn,
 Soo moche ase I have cheyrischyd the dame and all the
 kyn,
 Behynd my bake to s've me thus.
 All olde men insampull take be me,
 How I am begylid, here may you see,
 To wed soo young a chyld.
 Now fare well, Mare, I leyve the here alone,
 Worthe the dam and thy warkis yche one;
 For I woll noo more begylld be, for frynd nor foe.
 Now of this ded I am soo dull,
 And off my lyff I am so full, no further ma I goo.

An angel, whose explanation removes Joseph's jealousy, desires him to comfort Mary, for,

———a cleyne meydin ys sche
Sche hath conseyyed with owt any trayne
The seycond p'son in trenete.

The homely adoration of the infant by the shepherds is prettily told.

The first Shepherd gives his pipe to him and says:
I have nothyng to present with thi chylde
But my pype; hold! hold! take yt in thy hand,
Where in moche pleyzure that I have fond.
The second Shepherd presents his hat:
Holde! take thow, here, my hatt on thy hedde,
And now, off won thyng, thow art well sped.
The third Shepherd offers his gloves to him:
Have here my myttens, to pytt en the hondis,
Other treysure have I none to present the with.

Public Schools.

From very early times, when regular theatres were unknown, and itinerant minstrels acted in the halls of the nobility at Christmas, plays were performed, as still they are, by the pupils of the great public schools of England. Such are the classic dramas at Westminster, Eton and other colleges. At Eton, the ancient consuetudinary, as it is called, containing all its old and original customs, relates that about the 30th of November the master was accustomed to choose such Latin stage plays as were most excellent and con-

venient to be played in the following Christmas holidays before a public audience. Plays were also acted by choir boys, who probably acquired a turn for theatrical representations from their annual ceremonies of the Boy Bishop, which became common in almost every religious community that was capable of supporting a choir. The scholars of St. Paul's school, in London, were, till a comparatively recent period, in great celebrity for their theatrical talent, which was in full exercise upon the Mysteries as early as the reign of Richard II, for in 1378 they presented a petition to his majesty, praying him "to prohibit some unexpert people from presenting the history of the Old and New Testament to the great prejudice of the clergy, who have been at great expense in order to represent it publicly at Christmas."

Skinner's Well.

But the more eminent performers of Mysteries in London, were the society of parish clerks. Between the 18th and 20th of July, 1390, they played interludes at the Skinner's well, as the usual place of their performance, before King Richard II, his queen and their court; and at the same place, in 1499, they played the *Creation of the World*, and subjects of the like kind, for eight successive days, to splendid audiences of the nobility and gentry from all parts of England. The parish clerks' ancient performances were memorialized in raised letters of iron upon a pump on the east side of Rag, now Ray street, Clerkenwell. The following was part of the inscription: "Round this pump, as history

informs us, the Parish Clerks of London, in remote Ages, commonly performed sacred plays. That custom caused it to be denominated Clerks'-well, and from it this parish derived its name"—Clerkenwell.

The waters were greatly esteemed for their healing qualities, especially by the friars and nuns who lived nearby; for in this neighborhood, now one of the most thickly populated districts in London, stood a Benedictine convent, where solemn choral chants, with the peal of the deep-toned organ, were often interrupted by cries from an adjacent bear-garden and from a place still known as Hockley-in-the-Hole, where rude and noisy sports were carried on to the great annoyance of the devout.

Sixteenth Century Plays.

After the Reformation, King Edward VI is said to have written a comedy, and persons of various ranks produced an incredible number of religious comedies and tragi-comedies, some of which were polemical. One was entitled, *Jesus the true Messiah*; another, the *New German Ass of Balaam*; a third, the *Calvinistic Postilion*, and so on. Mysteries of this kind were composed by the once celebrated John Bale, who, having been a Catholic of the Carmelite monastery at Norwich, became a student at Oxford, renounced the tenets of Rome, and took, as he says, "to wife, the faithful Dorothy in obedience to that divine command: Let him that cannot contain, marry." He obtained church preferment, was successively bishop of Ossory, and archbishop of Dublin, with a prebendal

stall at Canterbury, where he died in 1563. One of this protestant prelate's Mysteries, written in 1538, to vindicate the doctrine of grace against such as held the doctrine of free will and the merit of works, is entitled, a "*Tragedy or Enterlude*, manifestyng the chiefe promyses of God unto man," etc.; the characters are: God, Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Isaiah and John the Baptist; and at the end of each act is a kind of chorus which was performed with voices and instruments.

In 1573 was printed "A new Enterlude no less wittie than pleasant, entitled *New Custom*," written with a view to vindicate and promote the reformation against "Old Customs." The characters are allegorical, and discuss the comparative merits of the doctrine held by the two churches with more earnestness than temper. *New Custom*, however, cannot be properly called a Mystery, but a Morality. Theatrically considered, Mysteries are dramatic representations of religious subjects from the Old or New Testament, or Apocryphal story, or the lives of saints. Moralities are dramatic allegories, in which the characters personify certain vices or virtues, with the intent to enforce some moral or religious principle. Moralities were of later origin than Mysteries, but they existed together, and sometimes each partook of the nature of the other.

Though there is no existing record of the representation of Mysteries in England since the latter part of the sixteenth century, yet, for some time after the Reformation, Mysteries and Moralities continued to be written expressly to promote the new order of things. They lashed the Catholics unsparingly, who do not

appear to have ventured to retort. The performance of Mysteries was forbidden by Henry VIII, and though restored by Mary, yet no attempts were made by such means to stay the fall of the papal power in England. It had received a mortal shock; and the chief trace that the old hierarchy left of its dramatic existence was the acting of plays in churches, which, though forbidden in 1542, were continued by the choristers of St. Paul's cathedral and the chapel royal as late as the reign of Charles I.

Puppet-Shows.

A puppet-showman's bill, in the reign of Anne, announces scriptural subjects as follows: "At Crawley's Booth, over against the Crown Tavern, in Smithfield, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little opera, called the *Old Creation of the World*, yet newly revived; with the addition of *Noah's Flood*; also several fountains playing water during the time of the play. The last scene does present Noah and his family coming out of the ark, with all the beasts two by two, and all the fowls of the air seen in a prospect sitting upon trees; likewise over the ark is seen the sun rising in a glorious manner: moreover a multitude of angels will be seen in a double rank, which presents a double prospect, one for the sun, the other for a palace, where will be seen six angels ringing of bells. Likewise machines descend from above, double and treble, with Dives rising out of hell, and Lazarus seen in Abraham's bosom, besides several figures dancing jigs, sarabands, and country dances, to the admiration of the spectators;

with the merry conceits of Squire Punch, and Sir John Spendall."

Perhaps the adventure of Punch in the common puppet-show gave rise to dramatic performances of greater celebrity. Punch always comes up gay, heedless, and very well satisfied with himself. He is a sensual, dissolute, hardened character, who beats his wife and child, has a thorough contempt for moral reputation, disregards the advice of the priest, knocks him down, dances with his female associates, is a little frightened by a spectre, becomes as bad as ever, does not fear the devil, fights with him, is conquered, and finally carried off to hell.

The *Tatler* of May 14th, 1709, quotes a letter from Bath, describing the rivalries of Prudentia and Florimel, two ladies sojourning at that fashionable watering place. Florimel had bespoken the play of *Alexander the Great*, to be acted by a company of strollers, and the letter-writer was to be of her party, but says, "Prudentia had counterplotted us and had bespoken for the same evening the poppet show of the *Creation of the World*. She had engaged everybody to be there, and to turn our leader into ridicule, had let them know that was to be made the most like Florimel that ever was seen. On the morning of the performance the poppet drummer, Adam and Eve, and several others that lived before the flood, passed through the streets on horseback to invite us all to the show, and Mr. Mayor was so wise as to prefer these innocent people, who were to represent the Christians, before the wicked players who were to personate Alexander. When we

came to *Noah's Flood*, Punch and his wife were introduced dancing in the ark. Old Mrs. Petulant desired both her daughters to mind the moral, and then whispered to Mrs. Mayoress, 'This is very proper for young people to see.' Punch, at the end of the play, made Prudentia a bow, and was very civil to the whole company, making bows till his buttons touched the ground."

Shakespeare mentions the performance of Mysteries in these puppet shows, which, in his time, were known as "motions," his Autolycus, for instance, "compassing a motion of the *Prodigal Son*." Such entertainments found favor with the people, and even in the nineteenth century were much in demand. In one performed on Twelfth Night, in 1818, the prodigal son was represented as carousing at the Swan Inn at Stratford, while, on every fresh call for liquors, the landlady was seen to score double. There was also *Noah's Ark*, with *Pull Devil*, *Pull Baker*, or the last judgment upon a baker who sold short weight and was carried to hell in his own basket.

Ancient memories and myths displayed their vitality at the annual festivals celebrated by the people, especially on the eves of St. Peter's and St. Paul's and the evening of St. John's day. On the last of these days the play of *St. George* was the favorite performance, and in this were introduced the earliest of English traditions. On all these occasions the houses were adorned with leaves; fires were kindled and there were processions on foot or horseback, with men in armor, the figures of giants and dragons, and sometimes the devil in a coat of feathers. On the first of the May

moon the people assembled under the open sky to do homage to the month and to bring home May trees and plant them before their houses. Among the plays given at this festival were performances from the legend of Robin Hood.

Robin Hood.

In a sixteenth century play of *Robin Hood*, still extant, all the well-known characters are introduced, as they appeared at the May games, with Robin as the lord of misrule, attended by Maid Marian as queen of the May; by Friar Tuck, Little John and the rest. In one of his sermons, Bishop Latimer complains that, going to preach in a certain parish on a holiday, he found the church door locked, because, as he was told, all the people had gone to hear Robin Hood, and to him the good bishop was fain to give place. At a May game at Shooter's hill, near London, Henry VIII was entertained by the officers of his guards, two hundred in number, all clothed in green and headed by one who personated the famous outlaw. Meeting the king as he was taking his morning ride, attended by the queen and members of the court, he invited him to see how he and his companions lived, and to this the monarch consented. Thereupon he was conducted by the archers blowing their horns to a green wood under the hill, and ushered into an arbor of boughs, formed into chambers covered with flowers and sweet herbs. Apologizing for the want of more delicate viands, Robin said to the king: "Sir, we outlaws usually breakfast upon venison, and have no other food to offer you." The

king and queen then sat down and were served with venison and wine, being well satisfied with their entertainment.

Ever since the time of Henry VIII *Robin Hood*, with its bold, outlawed hero, its jovial priest, its pretty maid and other attractive personages, has been, as even to-day it is, a favorite theme for dramatic and operatic treatment, nor can it be said that frequent repetition has staled its charms or sated the appetite for one of the most romantic of mediæval romances garbed in theatrical vesture.

IV

Miracle and Moral Plays—Pageants.

Though Miracle plays were the dramatized legends of the saints and had little to do with Scriptural story, the term was commonly applied also to the Mysteries which grew out of the celebration of Christmas and Easter festivals. Of the Middle-English Miracle plays, in the stricter sense, almost nothing is preserved; for the dramatized legends of the Virgin, in the Coventry cycle, or even in the York Corpus Christi plays, cannot be classed among them, owing to their close connection with the Mysteries. Besides, our knowledge of the dramatic treatment of lives of the saints, or miracles of the saints, is confined to traditionary names, as Catherine, Christine, Fabian, Crispin and Crispian. We may be able, however, to form an idea of such dramas from the various legends of the saints paraphrased in dialogue and action into the simple technology of the Mysteries.

The Credo.

It is harder to say how it stood with the play of the *Credo*, mentioned in the records of York. This play,

together with the books and banners belonging to it, was bequeathed, in 1446, to the Corpus Christi guild, existing at York since 1408, by one of its members, a priest named William Reveter; and, according to his will, it was afterwards acted by the brotherhood every tenth year at Lammas. Reliable signs justify us in concluding that it was by no means a recent play even in the year 1446, and that it was a well-known and favorite piece. The drama was of very great length, and was therefore probably a small cycle. The twelve articles of the *Credo* may have been represented by twelve pageants, but how? Were the contents of each article presented to view as a symbolic drama? In that case, the whole, like the separate parts, would have belonged to the Mystery species. Or was the origin of each article referred to one of the apostles, according to the well-known tradition? Or, finally, did each separate case treat of the wondrous recompense or punishment for belief or unbelief?

The Sacrament.

Among other Miracles, those were very popular which referred to the sacrament of the altar, and a multitude of legends treat of this theme. Bad men manage to get possession of a consecrated host, which they then pierce with daggers, and throw it into the fire or boiling oil. Blood flows from the violated host, and in the fire, or wherever else it has been thrown, Christ's figure appears in his glorified form. The miracle and the crime that causes it are manifested;

the venerable host is conducted solemnly to the church and receives special adoration; the guilty are usually punished terribly.

A miracle of this sort, said to have taken place at Heraclea in Aragon in 1461, is dramatized in an English play, which must necessarily be of about the same date, and must therefore have affected the spectators with the whole force of a recent occurrence. A rich merchant, Aristorius, of Heraclea, who introduces himself to the public in the same way as the Herods or Pilates of the Mystery plays, has as his house-companion a priest, Brother Isidore. Isidore guards the key of his church rather carelessly, and even forgets to lock the tabernacle door. A very rich Jew, Jonathas, offers the Christian merchant, who is eager to make money, a hundred pounds for securing him a consecrated host. Counting on the negligence and deep sleep of Brother Isidore, the merchant completes the bargain; the Jew receives the host, and the Christian Judas the hundred pounds. Jonathas now begins at once, with the help of his four servants and accomplices, his horrible experiments with the holy sacrament, and does not even stop when its wondrous power is revealed by manifest signs and to his own hurt. The entire scene is carried out with the most vivid realism.

There is also a comic intermezzo of great effect. Jonathas has lost his right hand in his sacrilegious experiments, and this now forms a motive for the introduction of the miracle doctor, one Brundyche, and his servant. The doctor knocks at Jonathas's door, and offers him his medical assistance. The Jew, however,

declines his aid, and the doctor's servant is so insistent that both are driven off with blows. The Jews still continue their criminal business till the appearance and voice of the Saviour induce them to desist. The repentant Jonathas, who by God's favor has had his hand restored, now hurries to the bishop and confesses all. The bishop repairs to the sinner's house, and the sanctified host is brought in solemn procession into the church. The report of the new miracle spreads; Aristorius repents of his crime and does penance; Isidore receives a strong pastoral exhortation; the Jews confess publicly their guilt and desire baptism, which the bishop administers. Thus ends the play of the *Sacrament*, in this case without torture or execution, and to the joy and edification of all.

Interludes.

English princes had their own plays at court, as is attested by documents since the time of Edward III, and these certainly did not consist solely of pantomimes and masquerades. In the pauses between the courses at state banquets, performances of all sorts were in general favor, and from this arose the name of Interlude as an appellation for a dramatic poem of very elastic character.

Even in the earliest English times were heard in palaces other forms of poetry than the minstrels' lay; for poems in dialogue were also recited, and there the mime, or jester, was probably no unknown guest. The productions with which the Anglo-Norman Jongleurs were accustomed to regale their chiefs and princes were

no doubt largely in dialogue, and frequently in dramatic form. In such an atmosphere a purely secular comic drama could grow up. Where the epic farce, the poetic contest in dialogue form, and the impromptu jests of the buffoon and the mime, were already to hand, it was an easy step to put their contents into dialogue and action.

When the English language was beginning to supersede the French, some dramatic farces were even then being composed. Any considerable development of this species was, however, impossible at a time when the interest in native compositions was limited to the burghess classes, and when the Religious drama drew the whole attention to itself. But we have already seen, especially in the country Mysteries of Woodkirk, how the farce within the Religious drama itself was gaining decided recognition.

One independent dramatic farce of that early time is, indeed, extant, although in a fragmentary form. We have the beginning—presumably somewhat more than a third of the whole—of an *Interlude de Clerico et Puella*, which was probably composed in the reign of Edward I. It is in the Northumbrian dialect, and the author, like his hero, appears to have been a clerk or student. As far as this fragment goes only three characters appear, and, if we do not count the puppy, there were probably no more. Not one of the characters introduces himself. We know them only from the dialogue, and the dialogue is all action. The clerk, entering Maria's house, says:

Clerk.—A beautiful good morning to you, miss.

Maria.—You are welcome, sir, by Saint Michael.

Clerk.—Where is your father? where is your mother?

Maria.—By God, neither of them is at home.

Clerk.—The man must be happy who gets such a maid for his wife.

Maria.—Out, out, by God and Saint Leonard! For loose lovers and promise-breaking clerks I have no room in house or hall.

We are thus set right into the middle of the action at a stroke. When the paramour is refused and sent off, in a second scene we see him immediately visiting the house of the procuress. "God bless you, Aunt Elwis," he says. No monologue, no consultation with a friend, allows the interest to slacken. Everything of that sort is simply taken for granted. The clerk says to Aunt Elwis: "They sent me here for your help and advice." Compare with this the verbosity and clumsiness of the ordinary sort of *Mysteries* and *Miracles*. The fragment breaks off in the middle of the second scene.

Serious subjects were also represented in the Interludes. Well-to-do artisans were accustomed to regale themselves with a *Miracle* play at their common festal dinner on the day of the patron of their guild. And since the *Mystery* had the greatest dramatic interest, it was here readily played as an Interlude—though perhaps only in pantomime. During the banquet at the Council of Constance, on January 24th, 1417, the English fathers caused to be performed, by tableaux and gestures, the *Birth of Christ*, the *Adoration of the Three Kings*, and the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, and invited

the Council and many burgesses to the feast and exhibitions. Seventy years later, when Henry VII was in Winchester at the birth of his eldest son, Prince Arthur, *Christ's Descent to Hell* was played before him, as an Interlude, by the choir boys. During the reign of the same king another species of drama, hitherto unmentioned, began to lay claim to the ground occupied by the Interludes, and that was the Morality, a species which, in the history of the drama, unites the middle ages with modern times.

Origin of the Moral Plays.

The Morality or Moral play owes its origin to the same spirit that introduced the allegorical tendency into religious literature and court poetry; that is, to the effort to illustrate moral doctrines and abstract ideas in bodily form. Unfortunately, in doing so, the drama, as well as the romance, took the wrong path. Instead of illustrating the universal by the special, the distant by the near, the abstract and intellectual by the concrete and personal, writers were satisfied with raising the abstract substantive into a person, with dressing out this personage according to its meaning and making it speak and act. The subtlety of the age took a pleasure, as it were, in hunting abstractions to death, without being shocked by the gross incongruity arising from such consistency. Virtues and vices, mental faculties, inclinations, physical, spiritual, and moral influences form the persons of the Moral plays, which included also such general conceptions as man and the human race.

The Mysteries had undeniably a great influence on the formation of the Moral plays. The latter followed the former in the arrangements of the stage, the manner of performance, costume and equipment, and in important technical points; they had the persons of God and the devil in common, though these were fashioned according to necessity in both classes of plays. Even the verbose style of the Mysteries seems to have been occasionally borrowed.

The Paternoster.

The oldest English Morality of which we have any record was called the play of the *Paternoster*. Its first performance at York, which took place probably in the reign of Edward III, made so deep an impression that a guild of men and women was formed expressly for the purpose of insuring its more frequent and regular performance. It appears that the play formed a series or cycle of Moralities; the different parts opposed a vice or sin to the corresponding virtue, the name of one of them being the *Play of Lazarus*. The relation of these parts to the whole can be inferred from mediæval confession books and moral tracts; the entire series probably contained seven sections.

The Castle of Constance.

The oldest extant Moral plays belong to the fifteenth century, and these are the *Castle of Constance*; *Spirit, Will and Understanding*, and *Humanity*, all

treating in various ways the same theme—the conflict between good and evil in the soul of man. It is, in fact, the same subject—the fall and redemption of man—as is discussed in the Mysteries, where, however, it is considered as concrete and historical, while in the Moralities it is abstract and typical. Of these three plays, the *Castle of Constancy* was probably the most appreciated. It shows a thorough knowledge of theatrical effect, an effort to throw as much as possible into external action, and an endeavor to satisfy the eye by a rich display of scenery. The stage was of circular form. In the centre rose a castellated structure, which gave the play its name; beneath it was a bed for the hero of the drama, *Humanum Genus*, or the Human Race. At the circumference were four smaller stages, equally distant from each other and placed at the four points of the compass: in the east a stage for God, in the south for the Flesh, in the west for the world and in the north for the Devil, who is here called Belial. The action covers the whole life of the hero from birth to death, *Humanum Genus* appearing as a new-born child, as a youth, as a man and as a graybeard.

As soon as the child appears, we see the angel of Good and the angel of Evil holding converse with him. He follows the evil angel and is led to *Mundus*, the World, who gives Joy and Folly, and very soon also Slander, for his companions. By the latter, who is a female personage, *Humanum Genus* is introduced to Greed, who soon presents to him the other deadly sins. We see the hero, when a young man, choosing Lust as his bed-fellow; and, in spite of the endeavors of his good angel,

he continues in his sinful career until at length Repentance leads him to Confession. At forty years of age we see him in the castle of Constancy, whither he has been brought by Confession, surrounded by the seven most excellent Virtues; and here the case becomes exactly similar to the one in the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. The castle is surrounded by the three evil powers and the seven deadly sins, with the devil at their head, and with foot and horse is closely besieged. Humanum Genus commends himself to his general, who died on the cross; but the Virtues valiantly defend the castle, and Love and Patience and their sisters cast roses down on the besiegers, who are thereby forced to retire.

But, in the meantime, Humanum Genus has become an old man, and now yields to the seductions of Greed, who has succeeded in creeping up to the castle walls. The hero quits the castle and follows the seducer, but his end is nigh at hand. The rising generation, represented by a boy, demands of him his heaped-up treasures. And now Death and Soul appear upon the scene. Soul calls on Mercy for assistance, but the evil angel takes Humanum Genus on its back and departs with him along the road to hell. At this juncture the well-known argument begins, where Mercy and Peace plead before God on the one side, and Justice and Truth on the other. God decides in favor of Mercy; Peace takes the soul of Humanum Genus from the evil angel, and Mercy carries it to God, who then pronounces judgment, and afterward the epilogue of the play. The *Castle of Constancy* is one of the best of the English

Moralities, resembling somewhat *Everyman* and sharing with it the popular favor.

Spirit, Will and Understanding.

Compared with the *Castle of Constancy*, *Spirit, Will and Understanding* shows greater theological learning, but less knowledge of the theatre, and still less of the development of dramatic art. It satisfies the eye, however, by its rich costumes and the large number of figures appearing in character, though among them are eighteen dumb personages, who are merely presented to the spectator and dance and quarrel among themselves. There is far too little action; the long speeches between Wisdom, the second person of the Godhead, and the Soul are extremely wearisome, and though a greater interest is excited by the scenes where the power of wickedness is shown, the dialogue is lacking in dramatic force. We are merely told about things which should be presented bodily before us, both in action and speech, but there is at least one exception—in the scene where Lucifer, in the figure of a gay cavalier, seduces the three powers of the Soul, beginning by upbraiding them with contemplation and idleness. Spirit answers:

Spirit.—He is not idle who is with God.

Lucifer.—But there is a time for everything: for praying, fasting and working. Is it right that a man who has a wife and children and servants to support should lie on his side and live only for prayer and his own ease? He who acts thus is not from God; God was well pleased with Martha.

Spirit.—Yes, but he was still better pleased with Mary.

Lucifer.—But even the worst of the two had everlasting bliss. Is that not enough?

Spirit.—The contemplative life is best.

Lucifer.—I cannot think so; as for God himself, what sort of a life did he lead among men? . Answer me: Was he ever lost in contemplation?

Spirit.—His whole life was a teaching and example for man.

Lucifer.—No, not as far as I have learned. Sometimes he associated with sinners; sometimes, also, with the righteous; sometimes he worked, sometimes prayed, sometimes suffered. That was a varied life of his here on earth, and ye should also live like him.

Spirit.—What you say may be right. * * * *

And so it goes on till the seducer has completed his work with Spirit, Will and Understanding.

The results of the seduction are feebly portrayed, and the final return to good is illustrated by means which have nothing whatever to do with dramatic art. Wisdom comes again, quite unexpectedly, on the stage, and the Soul also reappears, but shockingly disguised, "more horrible to look upon than any devil." Further on, six youngsters in the form of devils creep out from her hideous cloak and turn in again to their lurking places. Anima, or the Soul, becomes aware of her shocking transformation, and Spirit, Will and Understanding perceive that they are guilty of Soul's degradation. All four quit the stage, and then "the Soul sings most pitiably in long drawn-out tones, as people generally sing at Easter week." Wisdom remains behind and delivers a long speech. The Soul then comes

back once more with the Five Senses walking before it, Spirit and Understanding at either side, and Will following. They are all now again in their first dress and in their original beauty.

Humanity.

Humanity, the third of the three oldest Morality plays, is a somewhat strange production. The comic parts are very prolonged and full of droll conceits and obscene jests, while most of the serious passages are very tedious. But the play shows a distinct tendency to individualize the action and character. The good powers are represented only by the figure of Grace, and the real crisis for the hero, who is named Mankynde, is called forth by the belief that Grace is dead. Seduction comes to him mostly in the forms of Uselessness and New-Fashion, and when their first attack has failed, on the advice of Mischief, they conjure up a devil to help them, who is to represent the Lusts of the Flesh. This devil is no other than Tytivillus, the humorous imp, whom we have already met in the Woodkirk play of the *Last Judgment*. The dramatic idea does not seem clear, nor consistently carried out; but the poet has many happy thoughts, as the manner in which Tytivillus begins his operations against the hero. When Mankynde is resting himself in the evening after a hard day's work, the imp steals his implement of labor.

The Moral play of *Everyman* probably belongs to the time of Edward IV. Later there were numerous adap-

tations and translations into German, Dutch and Latin, in which its original tendency was sometimes reversed. The moral in *Everyman* is almost the same as in the three preceding Moralities, and is fully as orthodox in treatment; the hero is also the same, but the fable has quite a different and much more original cast. We are not here shown human life throughout its course, but only the close of life, the time for settling accounts, which, however, throws its light on the whole previous career. *Everyman* is summoned before the judgment-seat of God by the messenger, Death. In vain he begs for delay and seeks to bribe the messenger; it is of no avail; go he must. He then looks about for a guide, a support—for some one who may plead his cause before God. He applies to Friendship, to Kindred, without success; to Riches, but these, packed up as they are, cannot be taken away. Then he goes to Good Works, but Good Works lies on the ground, tied down with the chain of *Everyman's* sins. Good Works, however, refers him to her sister, Knowledge, and she leads the suppliant to Confession. As soon as *Everyman* is adorned with the jewels of Penitence, Good Works is freed and receives the use of her members. With the help of Knowledge, Everybody then puts on the dress of Contrition; and now, accompanied by this faithful sister-pair and also by Prudence, Strength and Beauty, with the Five-Senses as Counsellor, *Everyman* arranges his last concerns; he makes his will, receives the holy sacrament and the last unction, and then goes forth upon his way to the grave. Then, in sight of the tomb, Beauty, Strength, Prudence and Five-Senses abandon

him; Knowledge accompanies him till she sees what becomes of him; Good Works alone remains true to him till the end, and follows him into the grave.

The English dramatist has treated this fable from a specifically church point of view, or even in a narrower clerical sense; on the occasion of Everyman's going to the sacrament, he makes Five Senses give an infinitely glorified dignity to the priesthood; but yet he knew how to give clear expression to this subject, and in a diction thoroughly dignified and serious, entirely free from the coarse jests so usual in Moral plays.

The faults of technicality in the Moral plays above considered are about the same as in the Mysteries; there is the same looseness of structure, the same freedom, and generally the same awkwardness in connecting the scenes. In both we notice that the chief characters usually introduce and describe themselves; which, indeed, was not so easy to avoid in the allegorical drama as in the Biblical. In the Moral plays, the intriguing, seducing powers have almost always a comic or humorous tinge, which reminds us of the way in which Pharaoh, Herod, Pilate, the torturers and the devils are characterized in the Mysteries. The sermons take up more space in the Moralities than the dogmatic discussions in the Mysteries, and, besides, the Moralities are by no means wanting in dogmatics. The allegoric action is not so clear in many cases as the Biblical, and the abstract figures have naturally less attraction for us than the corporeal.

But, nevertheless, they represent a decided progress. In the first place, it is a point of the greatest moment

that the poet was here free to invent his story for himself, or was even obliged to invent it. The choice of subjects is, indeed, fixed and limited, for the theme is always one and the same; but its variations are infinite. The will and power of the dramatist are shown by the way he conceives his task; the setting of the dramatic problem also devolves upon him, and to set it and solve it, he must exert his ingenuity and powers of observation. In order to find his fable, he must analyze psychologically; in order to breathe life into his characters, he must paint from life. What does it matter whether his persons are called *Luxuria* or *Avaritia*? They look like a young voluptuous girl, or a gray-bearded man, and they must speak and act like such. In this way the poet learns to create typical images of character, to invent situations where they can reveal themselves, and thus to gain the interest of the spectators; to inspire them with fear, or, perhaps, more frequently to provoke their laughter. In the discourses of his dramatic figures he mixes up all sorts of references to contemporary manners and a multitude of satirical touches and to the figures themselves he gradually gives a stamp of greater individuality. Instead of abstract names, or side by side with them, types begin to appear; even in the *Castle of Constancy* we see Slander calling herself by the expressive epithet of "back-biter." By and by concrete figures, though perhaps still typical, are introduced in increasing numbers. In the first place we see the fool, the harlequin, with his wooden sword, associated, under the name of Vice, as a companion to the Devil to assist him in his business, but frequently

also to wrangle with him, to mock him, to ride on his back and to belabor him with his sword. This figure appears in the later dramas in all sorts of special functions and under a multitude of different names. Indeed, even in *Mankynde* he appears practicing his nonsense under the name of *Myseheff*, and perhaps, also, in the *Castle of Constancy* as "*Detractio*" or "*Bakbyter*." Besides moral types, like *Hick Scorner*, the frivolous scoffer, in the course of time we see appearing also social types, like the *Tavernkeeper*.

Inception of the Modern Drama.

Thus gradually the allegorical drama grew up into that real living drama which draws its material from active human life; or, at least, it prepared the way for it, and, having once seen the light, hastened its development. This is especially true of comedy. The drama has, indeed, everywhere to create individuals of a typical character; in tragedy the individual comes more to the front, whereas in comedy the type is made more prominent. The highest models of the comic species are represented by the foolish habits or characters of their age, in whom certain vices, failings, weaknesses are, as it were, embodied. And the greatest comic poets have never quite given over the illusion of being able to correct and reform mankind.

In the *Mysteries* not only were the subject and the idea unalterable, but the way in which the subject and idea affected each other was equally unchangeable. The power of expression was exceedingly defective. The

idea in the finished work still seemed to be something strange and external—conception and execution did not correspond. It was only by a whole cycle that the subject could be exhausted, and this cycle was composed of the most heterogeneous elements, and was, in fact, a work of accident. The single play very seldom formed a unit or whole; it seldom contained anything that could be called a dramatic action. The spectators were therefore interested only in the material. Only a few details made any æsthetic effect—such as character, situation, scenes; the whole was rarely or never dramatic.

In the Moral plays, on the other hand, the idea was everything; without it the material was not only dead, but had not even existed. The dramatic talent was thus exercised in trying to present the idea with great vividness and individuality; and at length the perception dawned that art, in imitating life and nature, should only represent the ideal side of the matter, and should everywhere make the idea stand out clearly from its subject, and more distinctly than in nature or history.

The same development took place in epic poetry, and indeed in literature generally; but this process appears most energetic in the history of the drama, which was destined to become the highest form of artistic expression for the English national mind, when filled with new life from the treasures of antiquity.

At the end of the middle ages it was yet far distant from the goal. But the passion for the theatre was vigorously roused; dramatic poetry began to work in all kinds of experiments, and even the attempts which may seem deviations from the path of progress were not

without effect on the results at last attained. We have already seen how, in the Coventry Mysteries, elements of the Moral plays had been taken up in the Biblical dramas at least as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. A singular production of a still more mixed description, belonging to the close of this period, deserves a brief description.

The Magdalene Legend.

It is the play of *Mary Magdalene*, a combination of the three species—Miracle, Mystery, Morality—with the Miracle predominating. The legend of this saint intrenched upon the domain of gospel history, owing to her conversion, and to the fact that the Lord honored her by appearing to her after his resurrection, while by identifying Mary Magdalene with Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, the connection with the Mysteries was strengthened.

The whole Magdalene legend may be divided into three sections. The first adds little to what is recorded in the Bible. The daughter of rich and respectable parents, Mary inherits, at their death, the castle of Magdala—whence her name—and gives herself up to a sinful life. Divine grace prompts her to go and see Christ while he was staying at the house of Simon the leper. What follows is well known. In the second section Magdalene crosses the Mediterranean to Marseilles, and there converts, by her power of working miracles, the heathen king and queen, who are childless, and promises them a son. The king and queen

now cross, by the way Magdalene had come, to the apostle Peter, after having intrusted their goods to the saint. During a fearful tempest on the high seas, the queen brings forth a boy and dies. The body of the mother and child are left upon a ledge of rock and commended to the care of Saint Magdalene by the unhappy father. The saint, though still at Marseilles, miraculously assists the helpless couple, suckles the child and preserves the body of the mother from corruption. The king in the meantime continues his way, is instructed and strengthened in the faith by the apostle, and then begins his journey homeward. Calling at the rock, he finds his child alive and well and sees his wife waked up again to life. All three now return to their protectress, Magdalene, at Marseilles. The third section is of a Christian ascetic tone and depicts the life of the saintly penitent in the wilderness, whence she is carried by the angels into heaven, to be fed with manna and find her happy consummation.

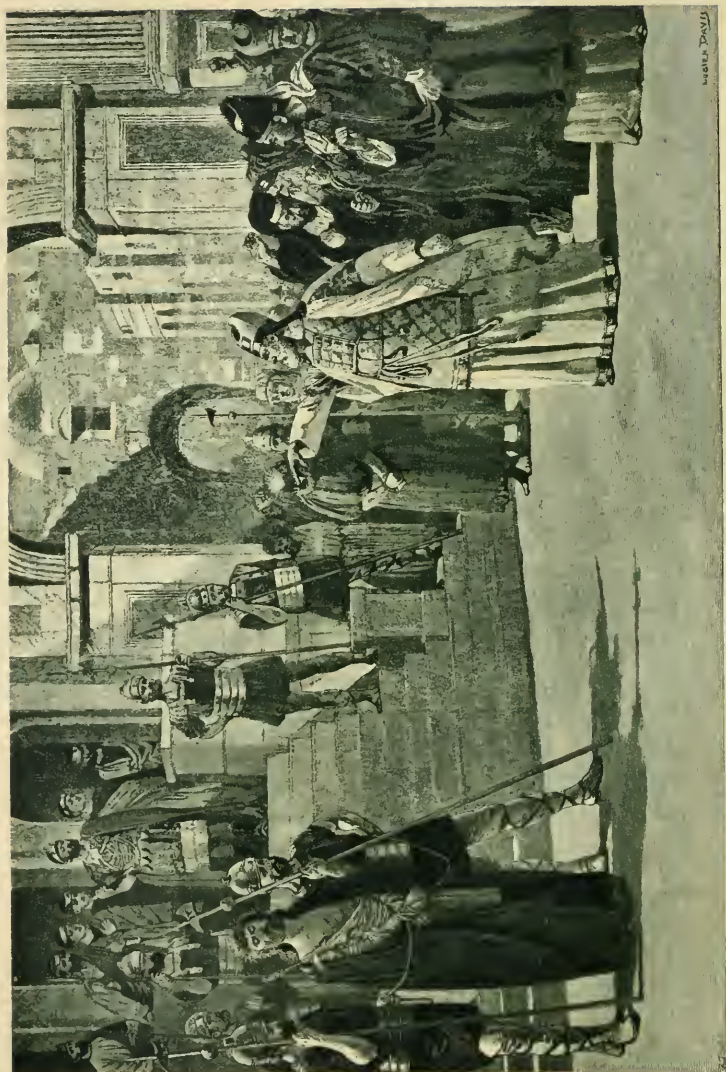
The majority of the mediæval versions of this legend treat the first section very shortly, as being well known. But there is a number of pieces devoted solely to the second section, and, indeed, this portion was well suited for the subject of a Miracle play. Our dramatist has here, however, worked up all the three parts in his story and has taken most pains with the first section. The motives which belong to the Mysteries are treated with much tenderness—such as Christ's visit to Simon the leper, and the washing of Christ's feet; Lazarus' sickness, death and resurrection; the Easter morning; the first appearance of the risen Saviour. The descent into

hell is also referred to in the monologue of one of the devils. Figures like Herod and Pilate appear, as is common in the Mysteries, but it would certainly have been better to leave them out; even Tiberius Cæsar is brought upon the stage, and, as the mightiest personage, he opens the piece, although not the action. The poet's art is best shown when he depicts the seduction of his heroine and makes use of the characters of the Moral plays. The kings of the World and the Flesh appear with Satan in council, and in their suite come the Deadly Sins; the angels of Good and Evil also hover round, and sooner or later take part in the action. The Deadly Sins besiege Magdalene's castle. Lust forces his way in, and by his flatteries and fair words succeeds in persuading Magdalene to quit her home and follow him. He takes his victim to a tavern and orders the host to produce his best. A gay cavalier named Curiosity soon appears and pays his addresses assiduously to Magdalene. He says the sweetest words to her, dances, eats and drinks with her, and in a short time gains his end. "I am glad that we have met," says Magdalene, "I begin to love you." "Now, my darling," he says, "will you follow my advice?—we have drunk and eaten together; shall we now go to another place with each other?" "Whatever you wish, my treasure! If you go to the world's end I will never leave you, but rather die for you." They go aside, and the evil angel hurries in triumph to the three high potentates—World, Flesh and Devil—to give them the good news, and then comes back to the girl in his keeping. The next scene shows us Magdalene in a bower, thinking about her lovers—

for she has now quite a number. Waiting for one or the other of them to arrive, she lies down to sleep in the fragrant bower. The good angel now comes near and rouses her conscience.

All these scenes show a keen perception, and breathe a certain delicate grace. The poet has seized the abiding womanly traits in Magdalene's character, and he reveals the same knowledge of woman's nature in other passages—in her moments of compunction and after her conversion. In the further course of his story, however, chiefly in the fabulous parts of the legend, he seems anxious to have done with his subject. He begins to cut it shorter, and to be satisfied with the barest necessities. But, nevertheless, his drama swells out to an immense size for that age, for it did not admit of being broken up into a number of small plays.

In its tendency, as in its rather clumsy arrangement, the play of Mary Magdalene is a thorough product of the middle ages. Such a mixture of different species characterizes the termination of that period, and announces at the same time a more modern epoch. The varied nature of the contents, sometimes so full of adventure, the frequent changes of place, the repeated voyage, the tempest, the exposing of child and mother—all these, in connection with the realistic humorous scenes and many other things which were taken up as heirlooms of the older stage by the theatre of the sixteenth century, prepare us for those romantic plays which paved the way for the dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare.



H. DAVIS

And the high-priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, "Anstecrest thou nothing? What is it that these witness against thee?" But he held his peace and answered nothing.

PASCHS-PLAY AT OBERAMTHEIM, FROM 1616. MS. G. 1.



THE PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU
After an original painting by Lucien Davis

V.

The Passion-Play at Ober-Ammergau.

The Religious drama of the present day is practically confined to the Passion-play as performed at Ober-Ammergau, in Bavaria, and at Selzach, in Switzerland, the former attracting, at its decennial performances, some of the largest and most appreciative audiences ever gathered within the walls of a theatre. As tradition relates, the play is acted in fulfilment of a solemn vow, made by the villagers in 1633, that if God would stay the pestilence then raging among them, they would perform the Passion tragedy in token of thanksgiving every tenth year. As one of the Mystery plays frequently acted during the middle ages, it was already well known to them, but it was specially adapted in its present shape by Father Daisenberger, for thirty years the parish priest, and by him was remodelled and rewritten. By him also were trained as actors his peasant flock, and in a word he was the soul of the entire affair until his death in 1880. "I undertook the labor," he said, "with the best will for the love of my divine Redeemer, and with only one object in view, namely, the edification of the Christian world." In his object he

was certainly successful, if we may judge by the crowds that flock to this Bavarian village to witness what is probably the greatest of all religious dramas.

The Performers.

Including the conductor and the choragus, or chorus-leader, there are seventeen principal performers on the stage, selected from the most cultured and intelligent of the wood-carvers—for artistic carving in wood, chiefly of crucifixes, is almost the sole occupation of the people. In all, there are between six and seven hundred persons on the stage, mostly of the peasant class, and, including workmen, machinists and others, the theatre gives occupation to 700 out of the 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants of Ober-Ammergau. The receipts are divided into four parts, of which the first is set apart for the poor; the second for the expenses of the theatre; the third for the school of design, the hospital and other institutions, and the fourth as a honorarium for the actors. A small surplus is also reserved for equal distribution among the villagers, so that all may share in the financial benefits of the celebration. Joseph Mayr, who was the Christus, received only \$100 in 1870 and \$157.50 in 1880, while Gregor Lechner, whose Judas was the masterpiece at both performances, had only some \$25. The parts are distributed at a general election, held on the 6th of December, the feast of St. Nicholas, and he who is chosen as the Christus is regarded as the village king. To obtain one of the leading parts is the highest ambition of youths and maidens

alike; to girls it is held forth as a reward for virtue, and the slightest whisper against their good name bars them from participation.

Until 1830 the performances were given in the village churchyard, and it was not until 1850 that the first theatre was erected. It was a barn-like structure of boards, unroofed, except for the stage and boxes; but a new iron building has recently been erected, with room for 6,000 spectators.

As changes, not all for the better, have been made since 1890, especially among the actors—neither Mayr nor Lechner retaining their parts in 1900—the play as presented in the former year will here be given, the text in both being almost identical. The performances extend through several months, usually beginning at Whitsuntide and lasting till the close of September. The Sabbath is the appointed day, for this drama is regarded not as a pastime, but as a religious exercise. If, as often happens, the crowd has been too great for the capacity of the theatre, the performance is repeated on the following day.

The play begins at eight in the morning and lasts, with a noon-tide intermission, until late in the afternoon. There are eighteen acts, with a prologue and epilogue spoken by the chorus, who supply all the interludes while the scenes are being changed, singing nearly fifty hymns to the accompaniment of Bavarian music, taken chiefly from psalms and masses. The music is pure and classical, low, soft and sweet, chiefly in the minor key, and with a refrain or lament running through the whole, suggestive of the same sad story.

The voices are true and correct and the deportment perfect, with every action in unison, calm and dignified, graceful and full of ease.

The Chorus.

The first sight of the chorus is something which cannot readily be forgotten—the band of peasants, fresh from their daily work, every expression, every movement, full of dignity, grace, and beauty, of noble simplicity, and with an entire absence of self-consciousness. Such is the effect even to those nearest to them in the theatre, who can clearly see every motion and play of feature; no distance is needed to lend enchantment to those noble figures and faces, which never failed to charm and to win respect. There are eighteen in the chorus, eight men and ten women; the choragus, who speaks the prologues, standing in the centre of the proscenium, with four men on the right and three on the left, while five figures stand on either side of the men. Their robes and blending of color are striking and beautiful; all alike wear a long white under-tunic edged with gold round the neck and skirt, with a colored outer mantle edged with the Greek key pattern in gold, and held together by a band across the breast; a girdle round the white under robe of the color of the mantle mixed with gold; sandals on the feet, with two straps across the instep over hose of the color of the mantle; on the head a golden diadem with a cross in the floriated centre.

The costumes form a brilliant but harmonious chord

of color. The choragus is conspicuous in his scarlet mantle; next to him on the right is green, then a brownish-red, green again, and purple; the five women wear robes of bright magenta, purple, dark blue, brown-red, and light blue. The three men to the left of the choragus wear green, dark red, and purple; the women magenta, purple, a bright grey, reddish-brown, and light blue.

Little prominence has been given to the part sustained by this excellent chorus in most of the descriptions of the passion-play, and some of the spectators have even said that they were slightly wearied by it; but to those whose spirit is attuned aright, the chorus appeals to the highest sensibilities of mind and heart, and greatly assists in the long effort which such a drama requires.

The choragus greets all who have come together in sympathetic words, accepting them at once as friends who are like-minded with the performers, and exhorting them to assist devoutly at the Mystery to be set forth, which is nothing less than the redemption of the world. "All hail! welcome to the band of brothers, whom love divine hath here assembled, who wish to share the sorrows of their Saviour, and to follow him, step by step, on the way to the cross and the sepulchre." The keynote of the whole is given in the first solemnly intoned line of the prologue:

I desire not the death of a sinner, saith the Lord,

and is sustained in the lines sung as the members divide and retire to either side of the stage; while the curtain

risers, and we see the first typical tableau from the Old Testament, *Adam and Eve Driven from Paradise*.

Yet from afar, from Calvary's height,
Shines through the night the morning-dawn

is sweetly intoned by the choragus; from this moment the chorus becomes, as it were, our spiritual guide, and we have but to surrender ourselves to its teaching and the impressions of the scenes set forth.

The first tableau is artistically among the least successful, partly because of the contrast between the upper limbs and shoulder of the chief figure, Adam, which were bare, and the lower, which, with the feet, were clothed in tricot; the effect is displeasing, and, as there is abundant drapery of skins, it seems quite needless. Moreover, the angels are anything but angelic, though appearing to better advantage in tableau than in action.

Tableau of the Cross.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the second tableau which follows within a few minutes. The curtain has fallen on the scene of the expulsion, the chorus has formed again in a straight line, continuing the song of thanksgiving for redemption; and now, as they retire, the curtain rises, and we behold the tree of life, the cross, on a rocky mount. At its foot kneels a girl of about thirteen, clasping it in her arms; while twelve children, clad as angels, are grouped around in attitudes of adoration and thanksgiving. The grace and beauty of this picture are remarkable, as also is the motionless

acting of the infants, many of them with outstretched arms. Among them was a flaxen-haired babe of about two, kneeling with clasped hands, while an elder girl laid one hand on her shoulder, and with the other pointed to the cross. During this tableau the chorus, having, as usual, retired to the sides of the stage, kneel while they sing,

Eternal, hear thy children's faltering prayer,

and then again exhort the spectators:

Follow the Redeemer now beside.

The Entry into Jerusalem.

Now the first scene in the *Passions-Spiel* begins, and often as we may have read and heard of the entry into Jerusalem as acted in this theatre, the reality far exceeds our expectations. It is one of the most powerful and affecting scenes in the whole drama, as the seemingly endless crowd flowed on, men, women, and children all swayed by one sentiment, every voice joining in the choral march, full of dignity, and one of the most successful pieces in the music. The opportunity is a grand one for a musician: the distance in which it is first softly heard, the waving accompaniment of arms and green branches, the onward procession. The change in the spirit of the words for a while from praise to prayer is plaintively illustrated, while the surging crowd advances, their voices growing louder and the air more defined. It is an affecting appeal, written from

the heart, and powerful to make the listener one in sympathy with the unanimous throng.

The people come slowly on, waving branches of bracken, the action of the limbs full of indescribable grace, although those in front are half-backing, as in royal presence. We feel that every eye is fixed upon one whom, as yet, we do not see, and to whom the multitude, with but one soul, is filled with adoring homage. Old words, old visions of childhood return to the heart: the great multitude which no man may number, with palms in their hands; the everlasting song of blessing, and honor, and glory, and power to the prince of the kings of the earth; and we seem to see a faint shadow of that which shall be when every discordant note has ceased, and the soul is set free for the endless harmony of thanksgiving.

The first appearance of the Christus is apt to cause disappointment, perhaps because expectation had been wrought too high by the song and triumph of the multitude. At all events, the first feeling is that he has attempted the impossible. The attitude, also, sitting sideways on an ass, cannot but injure the effect, and the first words he utters may cause disappointment. "What do I behold? Is this God's house, or is it a market-place?" he exclaims in accents of strong indignation. But throughout the scene, the only one in which he uses energetic action, he is perfectly dignified, and his last words, "Come, my disciples, I have done what the Father commanded me to do," give us the motif which was so admirably worked out by the actor, Joseph Mayr. His conception in that respect of one "driven

by the spirit" is beyond all praise. "Lo! I come to do thy will!" was expressed in every word and action, bringing the thought before the spectators with wonderful vividness. He was possessed by his mission, and throughout the tumult and variety of the play, this calm unity of unwavering purpose was manifested with un-failing force.

The Sanhedrin.

The anger of the traders whom Christ has driven from the temple, and the zeal of the priests to use it for their own ends, are finely brought out, and the first appearance of the Sanhedrin, prefaced by the tableau of the conspiracy of Joseph's brethren, is most effectively rendered; in the coloring a wonderful use is made of blue and purple robes.

Caiaphas now appears in his white robes, impersonated by the burgermeister, Johann Lang, who now becomes the principal actor. Nothing would be accomplished but for his efforts to compass the destruction of the prophet who has won the hosannas of the multitude. In this first council every consideration is urged which could inflame the audience-zeal for the law of Moses, fear of the Romans, fear for their own safety, lest Christ should stir up the people against them, and so "we should take the place which we have prepared for him."

To the traders who are brought in, and who bitterly complain of their losses, compensation is promised from the temple treasury, and their right of trading in the courts of the temple, granted by the high priest, is re-

affirmed. Still, "fear of the people" prevails; the prophet must be taken secretly and at night, and full power is given to the chief trader, who thinks he can bribe Judas, to offer a stated sum in the name of the council.

We may have been accustomed to dwell chiefly on the supernatural causes for the sufferings of Christ; but the leading thought in the construction of the Ammergau play is the human passions by which the divine will was worked out, the natural causes for the condemnation and death of him who, a few days before, had entered Jerusalem in triumph.

The effect on the priests of the raising of Lazarus cannot be introduced, because it lies too far behind the moment when the action of the play begins. But we are shown that three causes worked together for the final tragedy—the intense resentment of the traders at his interference with their gainful traffic, and their desire for revenge; the anger of the high priest at the authority assumed by our Lord in the temple, and the avarice and selfish fears of Judas. These are woven with true art into the threefold thread which runs through the whole story, gradually unfolding the natural causes for the rapid and tremendous transition. It is remarkable how Caiaphas endeavors to inflame the passions which, both in the traders and in Judas, are working for his purpose, while the traders, on their part, appeal to the jealousy of the priests for their own authority: "Hath not the high-priest given us leave to set out for sale openly in the courts of the temple all that is necessary for sacrifice?"

The parting of Tobias from his parents is a beautiful tableau, and lasted for several minutes, while the chorus enlarges on the sorrows of a mother's heart:

Till a blessed time of meeting
To his mother's arms once more
Shall restore her darling son.

The second tableau, the *Lamenting Bride* of the Canticles, is among the least interesting, although evidently prepared with much care, and a favorite with the peasants. The music, sung by one female soprano voice, is the most ambitious in the play, and somewhat overtaxes the powers of the vocalist.

Christ and the twelve apostles now appear on the scene, and the question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" is here put into Philip's mouth. Christ answers him nearly in the words of St. Luke: "The Son of man must be delivered to the Gentiles," etc., and replies to further questions in the words of St. John.

Simon, with the family from Bethany, meets him, and Christ accepts the invitation to Simon's house. "Conqueror of Death!" Lazarus exclaims; Mary Magdalene asks if he will accept a token of love from her, and Martha entreats to be allowed to serve him. "Do, pious souls, that which you have purposed to do;" he answers and blesses them. The peaceful scene of the supper at Simon's house contrasts finely with the tumultuous action of the greater part of the play. It is one of those which bring to mind more vividly than

anything before done how he, the perfect man, had lived and gone in and out amongst men as their familiar friend and companion. "Jerusalem!" he says, "O that my coming were as welcome to thee as it is to these, my friends!" When Mary pours the ointment on his feet, the Christus, raising his hand, says the one word, "Maria," in a tone of one touched to the heart.

The wonderful acting of Judas now becomes prominent—the dialogue between him and the Christus being lengthened from the scripture account. "What a waste!" Judas says with vexation. "Friend Judas, look me in the face. Waste on me—thy Master?" The concluding words, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world," etc., are inexpressibly touching, as we actually behold their fulfilment, after so many centuries, in a remote Bavarian village.

The Parting at Bethany.

In *The Parting at Bethany*, which followed, Mayr's acting was admirable. "Once more, farewell, beloved, peaceful Bethany; never more shall I tarry amid thy still valleys." And in the scene with his mother he sustained his part with true feeling and dignity. Most instructive is the human tenderness, undiminished by the overpowering sense of a mission to be fulfilled, which must bring agony to her whose feelings he fain would spare. Every movement in this scene is tender and graceful, especially the clinging clasp of the hand even after he has parted from his mother's embrace and turned to leave her. The words he speaks are, like

all, distinctly uttered: "Thou wilt suffer with me, dearest mother, wilt battle with me in my mortal struggle, and also take part in my triumph." The whole dialogue, none of it from Holy Writ, is in the highest tone of resignation and mutual love. His thanks to Mary are especially touching; contrasting with the thanklessness with which a mother's devotion is too often received, as though it were a thing of course. "Mother, mother, for the tender love and motherly care which thou hast shown to me during the three and thirty years of my life, receive the tender gratitude of thy son." And nothing can be more perfect than his last words, as he gives her into Simon's care, in answer to her question: "Where shall I see thee again?" "There, beloved mother, where the scripture shall be fulfilled; as a lamb brought to the slaughter, so he openeth not his mouth."

Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem.

The fourth act begins with the tableau, containing thirty-seven figures, of the *Rejection of Vashti and Espousal of Esther*. The choragus presses home the lesson, and before the curtain rises the chorus sings:

Jerusalem! Jerusalem! awake!
And know the peace which still may be thine own.

This, one of the most striking pieces in the music, is introduced by a bass voice and taken up by the chorus.

In the scene which follows, of the weeping over Jeru-

saalem, the Christus, in answer to the appeal of the disciples to establish the kingdom of God upon earth, again refers all to the Father's will: "Children, what ye desire will come to pass in its own time. But my ways are prepared for me of my Father; and thus saith the Lord: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.' " He sends Peter and John to prepare the passover, and they kneel and ask his blessing. A fine piece of acting on Judas' part follows, as he shows his empty bag to the Master, and exclaims: "If only the worth of that ointment were therein! Three hundred pieces of silver! How long we might then have lived without anxiety!" He remains behind when the rest of the disciples follow their Master to the temple, and his soliloquy betrays the disposition of mind which made him an easy prey. He complains of his master's prophecies of coming trouble: "I am weary of believing and hoping. There is nothing before us but poverty and low estate. . . . I will turn back. Happily I have been provident, and from time to time have laid aside a little out of the bag in case of need. If only that fool had put the worth of her ointment into the bag it would have fallen into my hands, now that it seems likely our brotherhood will be dissolved. As it is, I must look out for some means of support."

Judas.

From this time Judas becomes the person who arouses the greatest interest among the audience, who are on the alert for anything, however grimly, amusing.

One can imagine the delight they must have taken in the grotesque parts of the older play, and their keen interest in the actual hanging of Judas, surrounded by imps gobbling up the sausages which represented the entrails of the traitor. As it is, in spite of the grave and severe treatment of the tragedy in its present version, the peasants seem quick to seize on the grotesque element, wherever it appears throughout the performance. It should be remembered, however, that most of these peasants come from a distance to see the play, and though perfectly orderly and reverent, possess all the desire to be amused in the midst of most solemn tragedy, for the satisfaction of which ample provision was made in the religious drama of the middle ages.

All the following scene, when Judas is persuaded by the scourged traders to betray his master, is followed with deep interest, and the spectators seem to listen breathlessly to the traitor's monologue, when, left alone, he weighs the probabilities of success, considering in all things the effect of circumstances on his own interest. If the priests succeed he will become a famous man, as having helped to save the law of Moses; should the Master conquer, "I will cast myself repentent at his feet. He is really good; never have I seen him repulse a penitent."

The acting and intonation of Gregor Lechner in this scene can never be forgotten, especially when the thought of meeting his master's glance nearly overwhelms him. "I shall not be able to bear his piercing gaze," he cries out, already seeming to feel the gnawing

of endless remorse for his crime. "My companions will see in my face that I am a—No! I will not be that—I am no traitor! I do nothing but show the Jews where the Master may be; treachery means more than that."

The grouping of the first tableau, including some eighty figures, which precedes the fifth act, is in the highest style of dramatic art, and worthy of note is the extreme rapidity with which, after the curtain falls, a second tableau of the *Grapes from Canaan* is formed.

The Last Supper.

In the next scene, the *Last Supper*, the words are almost entirely from scripture; the account in St. Luke of the strife for precedence among the disciples being woven into the narrative of St. John. At the words, "I am among you as he that serveth," the Christus rises, and, laying aside his upper garment, girded with a towel, he addresses Peter in the well-known words. The rest of the dialogue exactly follows St. John's account, as also the words spoken when he has sat down. He rises for the institution of the eucharist, and says: "The old covenant, which my Father made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has reached its close. And I say unto you, a new covenant is beginning, which I solemnly consecrate to-day in my blood, as the Father hath delivered to me, and it will last till all shall be fulfilled." The actual words of consecration follow. Mayr's acting and movements throughout this scene, which demands so much, are simply perfect and inexpressibly solemn; there is a marvelous effect in the raising of the hands

and laying them upon the bread, as though Divinity were poured out in action. All that follows is admirable; the administration—the action and expression of Judas and the bearing of all the apostles. After this the Christus says: “My children, abide in me and I in you. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.”

After the prophecy of the betrayal by Judas and the denial of Peter, part of the discourse in St. John follows; the feeling and intonation with which Mayr delivered it being most beautiful and effective. He comes forward to the front of the stage, and raising his eyes to heaven, recites a hymn of thanksgiving; then, looking lovingly on his sorrowful companions, he says, in accents of solemn tenderness: “My children, why are ye so sad, and why do ye gaze on me so mournfully? Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions.” And the solemn words are continued in tones of such affecting devoutness that we grieve when they are ended.

There is a certain relief to the strain of mind and feeling which the scenes involve in the tableaux and songs of the chorus, while yet the latter never fail to bring home to the conscience the lesson of what we behold. The sixth act begins with the tableau of Joseph sold by his brethren, while the chorus sings:

What will ye offer for the lad?
Answer us, brothers, if we now
For gold deliver him to you.

And then they remind us:

How oft have ye, through evil deeds,
Your God even thus betrayed and sold!

The contrast is tremendous between the scene which follows, Judas before the Sanhedrin, and the closing scene of the preceding act. For dramatic force it is one of the most striking in the play, and perhaps Lechner's acting is here at its best. The mixture of irresolution and determination, of lingering regrets and eagerness to grasp the reward just within his reach, is perfectly expressed. He cannot bear to be questioned as to the cause of his rupture with his Master, answers Caiaphas surlily, and after the fearful words, which are the sad story of many a soul, "The friendship between him and me has for some time become cooler," breaks out abruptly with the question, "What will ye give me if I deliver him unto you?"

It would be impossible for any mere reading of the narrative to bring the awful tragedy of such a choice before the mind as Lechner's acting does. The choice which each soul must make between the dust of earth and the treasures of eternity, is brought out also with great skill and terrible irony in the text. "Only think, Judas," Dathan says, "thirty pieces of silver! What a prize!" Then he is flattered, told that much more will be done for him, that he will become a man of mark and distinction, till the last wavering of the will is overcome, and he cries out, "I am content!" and then, aside, "My fortune is made!" This single mo-

ment of fearful contentment and elation is his; in the very next he cowers before the indignant outburst of reproach addressed to him by Nicodemus.

The eagerness with which he claws each piece of silver as it is reckoned to him, and drops it into his bag, has often been described. He was last seen at the table of his Lord—now he is taking counsel with his enemies, has come into their secret, and united himself to the assembly gathered together against the soul of the righteous. And with overpowering horror the words of the chorus ring in our ears:

A faithful picture of the world
In this sad scene before us lies.

Caiaphas.

When Judas has left the council Caiaphas becomes the chief actor; his iron will treads out any spark of opposition kindled by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who leave the council after a vehement protest. Hitherto only bonds and imprisonment have been spoken of for the prophet; now Caiaphas, with splendid action, pronounces his decision: "Hearken to your high priest! It is better that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. He must die! No peace in Israel without his death!" "God has spoken through his high priest," a rabbi exclaims; "only through his death can the people of Israel be saved." The council breaks up without any solemn blessing from the high priest, but with a tumultuous outcry of "Let him die, the enemy of our holy law!" So ends

this wonderful scene, the counterpart of the intense calm of the one which preceded it, the closing words of which still echo in the heart: "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do."

A beautiful tableau introduces the seventh act: *Adam Tilling the Ground*, with his children around him, while Eve sits a little apart, a babe in her lap and a little one by her knee—eleven children in all. Here again the effect is rather marred by the contrast between the glaring tricot worn by Eve and the bare, round limbs of the children. There is a second tableau, in which twenty-four take part, of Joab treacherously slaying Amasa, which lasts for several minutes.

The Agony in the Garden.

The Agony in the Garden was one of the most difficult pieces of acting in Mayr's part; but he brought to it intense feeling, devotion and dignity. Never can the tone be forgotten in which he exclaims, as from the depth of a broken heart, "Father, my Father," or the touching tenderness of his complaint when he returns for the second time to the sleeping apostles: "O my most trusted ones! Even among you I find none to comfort me." The anguish becomes keener and more fearful in its expression: "The sorrows of death encompass me. . . . O sin! O sins of mankind, ye weigh me down! O fearful burden! My Father! . . . Thy most holy will! Father! Thy Son; hear him!" Then, as the Christus "reels in the victorious fight," an

angel appears. It were better, perhaps, if no words were spoken, and if the angel were only to support the head which leans on the arms of the messenger in mortal exhaustion. When he speaks once more, he has been strengthened. "Yea, holy Father! . . . I will accomplish it! Reconciliation, salvation, blessedness!"

There are moments like these during the play when the thought forces itself on one's mind: "These are the people to whom some among us would fain 'preach the Gospel.'" No one, and certainly not a peasant wood-carver, could have acted as Mayr does unless penetrated by the awful truths which he sets forth. And he is but the representative of that which has for hundreds of years flourished in his village, and which finds expression in the text of the passion play.

The taking of the Christus by the soldiers of the high priest ends the first part of the drama.

Annas.

After a brief interval the second part begins with a tableau containing thirty figures, of Zedekiah smiting Micaiah on the cheek, and then comes the scene of our Lord before Annas. The conception of the character of Annas is of one, more even than Caiaphas, filled with thirst for the blood of the Christ; though, from his age, with less power to carry his designs into action, yet suffering from the restless desire to see them accomplished.

He appears with his friends on the balcony of his house, saying that he cannot rest that night until he

knows that the disturber of peace is in bonds. The priests try to pacify him, telling him that the prisoner will soon be here. When the Christus is led in the Scripture narrative is followed, and the mournful procession from one tribunal to another begins. Mocked by the soldiers, he is led to Caiaphas, who holds his court in the middle of the stage. Two tableaux, the stoning of Naboth and the affliction of Job, precede this scene; and the chorus sung during the latter exhibition is striking and touching, with its continual refrain, "Alas! Behold the man!"

Here again, doubtless, to some minds old truths are brought home more deeply than they had ever been before. The chorus, the tableau and the following scenes are the setting forth visibly of the old words: "As for me, I am a worm and no man."

"Alas! Behold the man!
O all ye tender-hearted souls.
Ah, Jesus, Jesus, Son of God,
Becomes the scorn and jest of knaves,
Amid his awful strife with pain.
Alas! Behold the man!"

How, we can not but ask ourselves, have these peasant artists learned, both in action and in the long choruses which are interwoven with the scenes, to instruct those who have had every opportunity for instruction and reflection on the subject-matter of their drama, and to impress, as they never before were impressed, the very people who have meditated most deeply on the narrative of the passion?

The intense aggravation which must have been caused to the sufferings of one already exhausted in body and mind, by the repeated dragging about from tribunal to tribunal, is now probably brought home for the first time to the hearts of many by the action of the Passion play. The mockery of the guards, as they lead the Christus from one to another, does but fill in the scenes which we feel sure, from the narrative of the Gospels, must have taken place.

The Trial Before Caiaphas.

The *Trial Before Caiaphas* is chiefly an expansion of the scene described by St. Matthew in four words, "Many false witnesses came." One after another steps forward confronting the silent Redeemer, who stands motionless; the cord which binds his hands behind his back held by one of the mocking guard.

The Denial of Peter.

This is followed by the scene in the hall of the high priest, which is full of men and women. St. John comes to the door and asks leave to bring in Peter. The acting of Hett in the latter rôle is most striking and instructive, and he looks his part remarkably well. He stands facing the audience, over the fire which has been made in the middle of the hall, warming his hands, with an expression in which anxiety, grief and fear are mingled. The fear predominates as he hears the servants discussing the attack on Malehus by one of the

followers of Jesus, and agreeing that it will be a case of "ear for ear;" so that his answer to the first maid-servant seems almost the natural result of his condition. "I have been watching thee for a long time," she says. "If I do not mistake, thou art one of the disciples of the Galilean?" "I? No—I am not! Woman, I know him not, nor do I know even what thou sayest." He instantly tries to slip out of the hall, but comes against the maid who keeps the door. The difference between the frightened, hesitating manner of his first denial and his strong protestation later is strikingly brought out, especially when, the third time, he lifts his eyes and hands to heaven, and with vehement action swears by the living God, "I know not the man of whom ye speak." At this moment the Christus is led into the hall, and for a moment the Master and disciple are face to face; then Peter leaves the hall, and the curtain falls.

The scene which follows, of Peter bewailing his sin, is one of the most instructive and touching in the play; loving repentance could hardly be more deeply expressed both in word and action, nor the instant return of the soul to him whom it had left; horror of self only increasing trust in his forgiveness and mercy.

"O dearest Master! how deeply have I fallen! O weak, O wretched man! Thee, my most loving friend and teacher, I have denied—three times have I denied thee for whom I promised to die! Oh, I know not how I could so terribly have forgotten myself! Accursed be my shameful betrayal! May my heart be ever filled with sorrow for this despicable cowardice! Lord, my dearest Lord! if thou hast still grace left for me, grace

for a faithless one, oh grant it, grant it even to me. Even now hearken to the voice of my repentant heart. Alas! the sin has been committed; I can never more undo it, but ever, ever will I weep and repent over it; never, never more will I leave thee! O thou most full of goodness, thou wilt not cast me out? thou wilt not despise my bitter repentance? No; the gentle, compassionate glance with which thou didst look upon me, thy deeply fallen disciple, assures me that thou wilt forgive me. This hope I have in thee, O best of teachers. And the whole love of my heart shall from this moment belong to thee, and keep me most closely united to thee. Nothing shall be able ever again to separate me from thee!"

In the next scene the Christus is mocked by twenty-four soldiers of the high priest during the night so spent by him in preparation for the sufferings of the next day. He is blindfolded, smitten, pushed from his seat, so that he falls on the ground; but throughout he preserves dignity, meek endurance, and perfect silence.

Cain and Judas.

The tenth act opens with the tableau of *Cain*, in an attitude of despair, his hand pressed to his brow, standing over the slain body of Abel. Cain is clad in a leopard's skin, Abel in a sheepskin. Immediately after this tableau Judas appears, despair gnawing at his heart. "No hope! no escape!" he cries out in horror. "If the Master had willed to save himself, he would have made them feel his power a second time in the garden." He

rails at the accursed synagogue, at the traders, at himself, and rushes away declaring that he will have no part in the blood of the innocent. His remorse, face to face with his sin, is a fearful contrast to the repentance of Peter.

The Sanhedrin is assembled, and as Caiaphas is telling the council that he could not wait for morning to complete the condemnation of the enemy of the law, Judas bursts in, and the last terrible scene between him and his tempters takes place. It is but the drawing out of the Scripture account: "What is that to us! see thou to that." His despair is only treated with indifference, and his rage sternly rebuked. "Have ye condemned him?" he asks in agony. "He must die," is thundered in his ears by the whole assembly. "Woe! woe!" he shrieks forth; "I have sinned, I have betrayed the righteous. O ye bloodthirsty judges, ye condemn and destroy the innocent!" "Peace, Judas, or—" "No peace for me for evermore," he breaks out; "no peace for you! The blood of the innocent cries for vengeance." In vain he is admonished as to the respect due to the high priest and the council; despair raises him above them; and when reminded that he made his own bargain, has duly received his reward, and that if he behaves himself he may have something further, he cries out with intense horror: "I will have nothing more! I tear asunder the shameful compact: let the innocent go free. I demand his freedom—my hands shall be pure from his blood." Then, when sternly told, "Thy master must die, and thou hast delivered him to death," he shrieks out, "Die!—I am a traitor! May

ten thousand devils from hell tear me in pieces. Here, ye bloodhounds, take your accursed blood-money," and with terrible action and increasing rage and despair, he flings the bag of silver at the feet of Caiaphas. "Body and soul are lost, and ye—ye shall be dragged with me into the lowest abyss of hell."

There is a pause after he has rushed from the council; even Caiaphas seems for a moment appalled, and exclaims, "A fearful man!" but quickly collecting himself, says, "He has betrayed his friend; we pursue our enemy!"

Again the Christus is led in; and the gospel story in St. Luke is exactly represented. Annas asks him, "Art thou the Christ? tell us:" and the answer is given, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." And when the last answer of truth is given, "Ye say that I am," the horrible cry again breaks forth: "He must die!" and three members of the council are sent to Pilate to ask him to pass judgment before the feast.

The act closes with the final despair of Judas—a wonderful and fearful scene, the acting of which would alone, it has been said by critics, give Lechner a high place among the actors of Europe. His monologue, written by Daisenberger, is in sharpest contrast to that of Peter. Both see the full horror of their sin: but one sees it in the light of his master's countenance, healing while it wounded; the other in the hopeless blackness which he had voluntarily chosen. "I am cast away," he cries, "hated and abhorred by all, by all, even by those who led me astray; I wander alone with this in-

ward devouring fire. Oh, if I dared but once more to see his face; I might yet cling to him, the only anchor of salvation! But he is in prison—is perhaps already put to death; no hope, no hope for me! He is dead, and I am his murderer! Cursed be the hour when my mother brought me forth! Here, accursed life, will I end thee! let the most miserable of all fruit hang on this tree.” The curtain falls as he tears off his girdle.

Christ Before Pilate.

The eleventh act of *Christ before Pilate* is prefaced by the tableau of *Daniel accused before Darius*. It is a grand scene: on the left of the balcony of Pilate's house is the assembly of the scribes and priests; on the right the Christus amid his guards, and on the balcony the noble figure of Pilate in his magnificent dress surrounded by his court. Before he appears, Caiaphas again stirs up and exhorts the council, reminds them that the whole peace of their country depends on this moment, charges them to be firm in their resolve, and not to rest till their enemy is put to death. It is wonderful how he overcomes the difficulty of addressing and haranguing Pilate from below, and how the stronger will seems to reverse their positions and make Caiaphas the dominating figure. He pays a brief and haughty homage to the viceroy of Cæsar when he appears, and instantly proceeds to demand judgment on the accused.

The Scripture narrative is followed, but with additions. On Pilate's first declaration that he cannot con-

demn a man without knowing whether he is guilty, a rabbi informs him that the whole council have given judgment against him, and that it is therefore hardly worth his while to inquire into the case. "What!" he replies, "ye dare to propose to me, the representative of Cæsar, to become a blind tool for carrying out your resolutions. That be far from me! I must know what law he has broken, and in what manner."

The long struggle between Caiaphas and Pilate then begins, the latter clearly seeing through the malice of the accusers. When Caiaphas asks if the title of "King of Israel" is not rebellion against Cæsar, Pilate replies with derision: "I marvel at your suddenly aroused zeal for the honor of Cæsar." When he commands that Christ be brought into his house, that he may question him alone, a rabbi says: "That is a dangerous delay." But Caiaphas answers, "Do not lose courage! Victory belongs to the steadfast!"

The first and second conversations with Pilate, given in St. John's gospel, before and after the scourging, are in the play given in one, beginning with the second. "Whence art thou?" Pilate asks; and receiving no answer, continues, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Then at length the Christus speaks: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." "A bold speech," Pilate says aside; then, to the Christus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The rest of the conversation exactly follows St. John.

The famous words, "What is truth?" are uttered with a dreamy, inward expression and tone, as though outward circumstances had for an instant vanished from his mind, and he were alone with his own soul and with the flood of thought raised by the words of Christ. To the message of his wife, which is now brought to him, he replies that she may be without anxiety, as he does not intend to give way to the Jews, and takes counsel with his courtiers, who declare their belief that envy alone is the cause of the accusations against Christ. When the crowd of priests return beneath his balcony, he says decidedly, "He is guiltless;" but yet continues to parley with them, condescends to excuse himself for not yielding, and at length catches eagerly at the mention of Galilee to send the accused to Herod.

Christ Before Herod.

An admirable tableau of *Samson Destroying his Enemies by his Death* preceded the twelfth act. The unconcern of a group to the left is especially striking, continuing a game while the pillars are even then giving way. The scene of Christ before Herod is somewhat lengthy, but this is only through the faithfulness of the Ammergauers to the gospel history. Herod questions him "in many words," while Caiaphas and the chief priests, following their victim, who is now guarded by Roman soldiers, to this new tribunal, "vehemently accuse him." They are terribly in earnest, but fail to persuade the pleasure-loving Herod to take the matter seriously; he positively refuses to give any judgment

except that the Christ is a simple man, not clever enough for the crimes laid against him.

There are two tableaux before the thirteenth act—the *Bloody Coat of Joseph Shown to his Father*, while the chorus sing:—

“Even thus is Jesu’s body torn,”

and *Isaac upon the Altar of Sacrifice*. In the first scene the struggle between Pilate and Caiaphas begins again, as the latter stands beneath the balcony at the head of the council; the Christus on the other side, Pilate proposes to scourge him, “in order,” he says, “to meet your wishes,” and release him. But Caiaphas declares that the law requires that he should be put to death. Pilate then stakes all upon one venture, evidently with no doubt of its success. He has heard of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and it is clear that he regards the Christus as a popular idol, knowing that the priests “for envy had delivered him.”

To the people therefore he determines to appeal, pledging himself to abide by their decision. The part of Pilate could not have been written without fine appreciation of his character and motives, and it forms a most suggestive commentary on the text of the gospels.

“Ye force me to tell you openly what I think,” he says. “Moved by ignoble passion, ye persecute this man, because the people are better disposed toward him than toward you. I have listened long enough to your envious complaints; I will now hear the voice of the people.” He then says that he expects the people to assemble in order to demand, according to custom, the

release of a prisoner, and promises to allow their choice between Jesus and Barabbas to be final. "It will then be shown," he says confidently, "whether your complaints are the expression of the mind of the people, or only of your own rage." Caiaphas, no less confident in his power over the fickle mob, bows, and replies haughtily, "It will then be seen, O governor, that thou hast wrongly thought evil of us;" while the whole council cry out, "Release unto us Barabbas, and crucify this man." But Pilate answers firmly, "Ye are not the people. The people will decide. Meanwhile I will cause him to be scourged."

The Appeal to the People.

The action and words of Caiaphas, after Pilate has retired, are appalling in their bitter determination to pursue his victim to the death. "Pilate has appealed to the people," he says; "well, we will also appeal to them." He bids the priests to disperse themselves through the whole of Jerusalem, and to "move the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them." Every obstacle only feeds the flame of his fiery zeal; what is indicated by a few words in St. Mark is represented in most impressive action. "Let us not lose a moment," he exclaims; "let us go and meet the crowd, to excite and inflame them. Try to kindle in them the most glowing hatred against the enemy of Moses. Seek to win the wavering through the power of your words and promises. Terrify the followers of the Galilean by scorn and reproach, by threats, and if necessary by ill-

usage, so that not one may dare to come here, much less to open his mouth."

The traders take an active part in carrying out these commands; we are never allowed to lose sight of the working of their revenge amongst the causes of the condemnation of Christ.

The Crowning with Thorns.

The scene of the *Scourging and Crowning with Thorns* concludes this act. A gorgeous tableau, *Joseph made Ruler over Egypt*, introduces the fourteenth act; and a second tableau, of the *Two Goats as Sin-offerings* was also among the most striking.

The words of the chorus become more and more touching, and are full of instruction. We have just beheld the king of Israel, with the crown wherewith the Jewish nation crowned him; while in mournful accents the chorus sang:—

How shall his godhead now appear?
Alas! behold the man!
A worm, the scorn of soldiers now.

But as the curtain rises and discloses the triumph of Joseph, the strain is changed to one of joy:—

Behold the man!
See Joseph called to high estate;
Behold the man!
The type, in pain and joy, of Christ.

During the tableau of the goat slain as a sin-offering,

they sing of the new offering required for the pardon of sin:—

A Lamb, from every blemish pure;

and then suddenly break off their song, and for the first time actually take part in the drama; the choragus exclaiming, while fierce cries are heard in the distance, ever swelling in volume and growing nearer and still more near:—

The murderer's fearful cry I hear.

The unseen multitude thunder forth:—

"Barabbas be our choice to-day."

But the chorus sings in unison,

No, Jesus be from fetters free,

Though still unseen, it is evident that the crowd has grown in size and in ferocity, as appears from the intonation of the choragus,

Ah! fiercer sounds the murderous cry,

"Crucify him! crucify him!" is heard louder and nearer, as the crowd press on, though still out of view.

In vain the chorus plead:—

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

God will avenge the blood of his Son!

The multitude respond, in tones of anger and determination:

His blood be on us, and on our children,

and the choragus solemnly intones,

Be it then upon you and upon your children.

Christ Rejected.

The curtain rises. Again the surging crowd pour forth from the streets of Jerusalem, animated by one passionate sentiment. They are in four bands, led respectively by Annas, Caiaphas and two of the chief priests, Nathaniel and Ezechiel, and gather into one dense crowd beneath Pilate's balcony, acting and speaking as one man. "He has blasphemed God!" "To death with the false prophet!" "Crucify him!" "Release unto us Barabbas!" "The Nazarene must die!"—such is the burden of "their rude, lawless cry," until Pilate appears on the balcony with the Christ, "wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns," and there is a moment's pause as he pronounces the words, "Behold the Man!"

Pilate is still confident in the success of his appeal to the people, and when the cry of "Crucify him!" is still raised, orders Barabbas to be brought forth, and the Christ to be placed beside him. Then, as the two stand side by side beneath his balcony, and the crowd exclaim, "Let the Nazarene die!" he cannot contain his disappointment and astonishment. "I do not comprehend this people; a few days ago they followed this man, rejoicing and applauding him, through the streets of Jerusalem. Is it possible that the same should now demand his death and destruction?"

Caiaphas replies that the eyes of the people have

been opened, and a shout is raised, "Let him die! The false Messiah, the deceiver!"

One last effort is made by Pilate. Pointing to the two prisoners, respectively, he bids the people consider and choose—choose between the noble, gentle figure of him whom they have long honored as a wise teacher and who now, though without fault, bears the marks of cruel chastisement, and the frightful figure of the robber and murderer. "I appeal to your good sense, to your feeling as men. Choose! Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

Then the last fearful cry is raised: "Away with this man, and deliver unto us Barabbas!" And Caiaphas eagerly reminds Pilate of his promise. "I am accustomed to keep my word without needing a reminder," he answers; yet still struggles against the will which is overpowering his sense of justice. But his plea, "Shall I crucify your king?" only leads to the arguments and threats to which he at last succumbs. He cannot face the fear of Cæsar's displeasure.

The Judgment.

The most august trial in the world's history is here represented before us; and yet we are not disappointed at the result, but held spell-bound by awe and overpowering interest. We know what the bitter end will be, and yet can scarce believe that it will come. Can this noble and clear-sighted Roman judge yield indeed to the clamor of the mob? Will he endure the threat,

"We will not leave the place until judgment is given?" Can even the mob choose Barabbas?

Yes, Barabbas is set free and led away; formal judgment is pronounced and written down by Pilate's secretary, and then, having washed his hands, declaring to the last the innocence of his prisoner, he commands the two thieves to be brought forth. They stand beside the noble figure of the Christus, and the sentence is read. Then Pilate says, "Now take ye him, and"—he pauses, as though unable to speak the words, but at length they seem forced from him, and breaking his staff of office in two, he exclaims, in a tone of anger and despair—"crucify him!" He, too, has made the great choice, and turning hastily, almost rushes from the judgment-seat.

"To Golgotha!" is shouted, and a tumultuous procession is formed—one alone moving calmly and peacefully, though in bonds, and amid every mark of deepest indignity.

The Way of the Cross.

The Passion-Play began with the "Entrance," and now we have come to the "Way of the Cross." It is introduced by three tableaux: *Isaac Bearing the Wood to Mount Moriah*, the *Children of Israel Bitten by Fiery Serpents*, and the *Brazen Serpent*. Both of these latter are admirable in conception, in grouping and in coloring. There is a multitude of figures, numbers of them being children, and yet less than a minute elapses from the moment that the curtain falls on the first until it rises on the second. Moses is, of course, the central

figure in the last tableau, and he is admirably represented.

The first lines, sung by the chorus before these tableaux, are among the most solemn and impressive both in words and music, although the latter is very simple :

Pray and render heartfelt thanks!
He who drank the bitter cup
Follows now the paths of death,
Reconciling man to God.

The procession advances slowly from the right, met by the group from Bethany from the left, and by Simon of Cyrene and the women of Jerusalem in the middle stage. Far more impressive and noble than in the hour of triumph is the figure bending beneath the cross, each step evidently a struggle with mortal weakness, and yet moving "calm as the march of some majestic cloud" amidst the brutality and jeers of the crowd. He falls beneath the cross, but it is with unruffled anguish; he tries even in falling to support the burden laid upon him; we feel that the worn body is doing its utmost to obey the cruel behests of his tormentors.

The Christus has spoken no word since he said to Pilate, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my words," but now, as Simon of Cyrene willingly assumes the burden of the cross, he opens his mouth in benediction. "The blessing of God be on thee and thine," he says, in a voice faint with exhaustion and

anguish, and moves slowly on to meet the women of Jerusalem, Veronica and the Maries, with St. John. The latter follow on the way of the cross, as the procession passes out of sight.

The Crucifixion.

There is a pause after the curtain has fallen, and the painful strain is almost more than we can bear, as the chorus, clad now in black, file slowly in, and while the sound of blows with a hammer are heard behind the scenes, mournfully chant:

Come, pious souls, draw near the Lamb,
Who freely gives himself for you.
Behold him on the tree of doom,
Between two murderers he hangs;
He, Son of God, his life-blood gives,—
And ye no tears give back to him!

When the curtain rises, the two thieves are already fastened to their crosses, which are upright; but in the centre a prostrate form lies nailed to a cross, which has not yet been raised. There is a delay, while a messenger from Pilate brings in the handwriting which is to proclaim the sufferer a king even upon this cruel throne; then the cross is slowly raised.

It may be that the very excellence of representations of the crucifix to which we are accustomed, both in sculpture and painting, makes this living picture less striking than are other parts of the play. The effect is also diminished by the flesh-colored garment which

entirely covers the body, and beneath which it is evidently tightly laced in some sort of stays. For there is no expansion of the chest or of the muscles, such as would naturally be caused by the position, and which we see represented in even the rudest crucifix. The chest is quite flat, and gives the impression, when seen very near, of being tightly bound to the cross, as it doubtless is, by the stays which confine the body. The feet are covered by the tricot, the edges of which are clearly seen at the neck and wrists, which are uncovered; and there is a great contrast between its color and that of the skin, especially as the hands soon become almost purple from the binding of the wrists. All this, especially the clothed feet, impair the impression as we gaze on the motionless form so familiar to us in sculpture.

But all is changed when the head, which had hung slightly to the right, is slowly lifted, the eyes raised to heaven, and the first words uttered. At this single movement and expression of countenance all is forgotten except the head and features, and the words spoken. The whole of the scene recorded in Scripture is acted around the cross; the mockery; the soldiers parting the raiment; the attempt of Caiaphas to induce Pilate to remove the superscription; the conversion of the centurion. But now we can see nothing but the thorn-crowned head, and watch for the words which fall at intervals from the sufferer's lips. Nothing could be more perfect than the weary, agonized, but tender movement of the head as he turns it from Mary to St. John. Each utterance marks a stage of suffering and

desolation, and the time seems rather hours than minutes, until the eyes, full of anguish and of love, are for the last time raised to Heaven and the last words spoken.

Love masters agony: the soul that seemed
Forsaken feels her present God again:
And in her Father's arms
Contented dies away.

“And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.” This instantaneous change of feeling in the crowd, which had been worked up by the chief priests, is acted so as to make us realize it as we had never done before. Only Caiaphas remains firm and unchanged. Even the tidings brought hastily to him of the rent veil of the Temple fail to move him, though the other priests are evidently disturbed by some misgivings. His resentment against him whom he has destroyed only becomes keener, and he exclaims, pointing fiercely to the cross, “He has brought this to pass by his wicked enchantments.”

At some distance the effect of the pierced hands is perfectly given, but from very near the stage it is easy to perceive that the nails passed between his fingers and were then bent so that the very large nail-heads covered the centre of the palm, while the third and little fingers were closed so as to conceal the crooked part of the nail. A broad band passes over each wrist under the tricot, and is then fastened to the cross; there are many marks of nails clearly visible, after the

taking down from the cross, at the spot where the wrists would come, besides the larger marks, nearer the end, of the nails of the hands.

Caiaphas and the chief priests, who had left the scene on the news of the rending of the veil, return with persistent hatred to avenge, as he says, "the destruction wrought in the Temple," on the lifeless body of the Christ. But the limit of his power has been reached, and the victory of death begins. In vain he curses Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, forbidding them ever again to appear in the council. They are strong in the authority of the Roman governor, and, renouncing their allegiance to the Sanhedrin, boldly guard the sacred body.

The Descent from the Cross.

For scenic effect the taking down from the cross is, perhaps, the most beautiful in the play, both in grouping and action, with tenderness expressed in every movement and incident. The chief actors are both on ladders and in positions which might easily become grotesque. They have also to accomplish not only what is seen—the extracting of the nails and lifting down of the body—but the unfastening of the unseen bandages. Yet all is so done as to make the whole scene one of exquisite beauty. Nothing can be more tenderly reverent than the laying down of the body on Mary's knees, or the slow, mournful procession to the grave.

Here, it might be expected, the Passion-Play would end; but the few scenes which follow seem to be neces-

sary, both to complete the play and to lighten the feeling of profound sadness which has so long oppressed the audience. Without the resurrection the drama would be incomplete. When the chorus once more appears, in many-colored robes, we feel that joy and hope are at hand. They sing:

"Love, O Love, in thy dear blood,
Thou didst strive with God's own might."

* * * * *

Softly rest, O Sacred Frame,
In the stillness of the grave;
All thy bitter passion o'er!
In earth's lap, O softly rest
Till thy glory be revealed.
Never shall corruption's worm
Touch or mar thy holy flesh.

The Resurrection.

The scenes of the guarded grave, the resurrection, the women at the sepulchre, and even of the meeting of the Magdalene with her risen Master, are less striking; but when, after the Christus has left Mary, she exclaims, "Halleluia! He is risen," and the cry is echoed on all sides, as the chorus enters for the last time; the hearts of the audience respond to the song of joy and triumph chanted during the closing tableau which has taken the place of the scene of the ascension. This last is not now attempted, but the Christus is seen for the last time standing on a mount, in white and glistening raiment, holding in his hand the resurrection banner. His enemies are made his footstool

and cower beneath his feet, while around him are grouped his friends and many of the typical figures from the Old Testament tableaux. Even as we look, a ray of brilliant sunshine suddenly illumines his countenance and figure, and so we see him for the last time, while the hallelujahs of the chorus peal forth:

The Hero hath conquered
The might of the foe!
Few hours in the grave,
In the gloom hath he slept.
Sing before him holy Psalms!
Strew before him Conquerors' palms.
The Lord he hath risen!
Break forth, O ye heavens,
Earth, sing to the Victor,
To him who hath risen!
Hallelujah!

Even more touching than the greeting of the chorus is their farewell: "Let us behold, ere we part, the triumphant festival of victory. Now, in majesty and great glory, he enters the new Jerusalem, where he will gather to himself all whom he hath purchased with his blood. Strengthened and full of joy at this sight, return to your homes, O friends, filled with tenderest love for him who loved you even unto death, and still loves you eternally in heaven; there, where the song of victory ever resounds, Praise be to the Lamb who was slain! There, reunited around our Saviour, we shall all meet again. Hallelujah!"

In this little village of Ober-Ammergau, in the Bavarian highlands, is the last home of the mediæval

Religious drama, and here it is still acted in its integrity, with all the splendor and more of the reverence of ancient days. For many generations these peasants have not only steadily and patiently performed their vow, but have brought to the performance that earnest purpose of doing their best, through which all true art has been matured. The Passion-play and its traditions have been the very life of the village; each child born there hears of it, and prepares for his part in it from infancy, while to personate the Christus or the Virgin is the highest distinction to which any youth or maiden dreams of attaining.

And thus Lady Burton, a devout but liberal Catholic, who has given us in book form her impressions of the play as she saw it in August, 1880: "I had that pre-sanctified divine service feeling after the play, the same as if I had just left our mass on Good Friday. It was all the offices of the holy week in one. Or I felt as if I had just come out of a 'spiritual retreat.' It helps out marvellously in holy meditation, above all on communion days. I have now no difficulty in following Christ in my thoughts. I have seen the Man-God as he was during his sojourn on earth. Before I had imagined it; now I know it."

Such is the picture which is being engraved on the minds and hearts of perhaps two hundred and sixty thousand people in one summer. In truth, it is a splendid, holy school, and great would be the responsibility of those who should attempt to destroy it. Familiarity cannot breed contempt, as it is performed only once in ten years, and most persons only see it once

in a lifetime. Not only are the actors shut out from the world, but not for anything would they carry their play elsewhere.

The actors esteem it as the highest honor to take some part, however lowly, in the great play. The corrupting influences of gold and publicity have thus far left them almost untouched, though as seven hundred persons appeared on the stage at the last representation, in 1900, to which people flocked by thousands from all parts of Europe and the United States, it is not to be supposed that the performers and the townsfolk were altogether uncontaminated by the evils that follow in the train of fashion.

The Selzach Passion-Play.

Within the last few years the progressive Swiss people have created a Passion-play, whose main purpose seems to be dramatic effect, rather than the promotion of religious sentiment. The village of Selzach in northwest Switzerland has long been celebrated for the dramatic ability of its inhabitants, though until recent years there has been little opportunity for its development. In 1890 a party of enthusiastic citizens returned from Ober-Ammergau, after witnessing what they declared to be the grandest and most powerful drama they had ever seen, and with the characteristic spirit of the people—"what others can do, we can do"—set to work to produce a Swiss Passion-play.

The difficulties that met them were many and hard to overcome; but with the appearance in 1892 of Müller's *Passion Oratorio* the last serious obstacle—the

lack of suitable music—vanished. In 1893 the first performance of the Selzach Passion-play was given and achieved an immediate success, each subsequent revival being attended with increased popularity.

The plan of the play may briefly be said to be Müller's oratorio illustrated with tableaux representing the principal events in the passion of our Lord. That these were modeled on the previous representations at Ober-Ammergau cannot be disputed; but there was also originality, both in the conception of the performance and the manner in which it is carried out. The originators were men primarily interested in the drama, and the nucleus of their co-workers was supplied by the local dramatic and musical clubs.

Regarding the drama from a critical standpoint, it must be admitted that a much stronger representation might be given on almost the same lines. The first part of the performance, which represents typical scenes of the Old Testament, might, from a dramatic point of view, be advantageously omitted. Later, also, one or two tableaux of doubtful significance might be erased with profit. But judged as a whole, the play is of its kind one of the most intensely absorbing representations ever witnessed on the stage.

The performance is divided into two main parts, one being given in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The morning section contains the Old Testament scenes and twelve preparatory tableaux, representing the life of our Lord from his birth down to the entrance into Jerusalem. The afternoon division comprises the main play, the *Passion* proper, beginning with the de-

signs of the high priests and ending with the ascension. The music for the morning portion was written or arranged by the musical director of the Selzach singing society, and it is not until the actual passion begins in the afternoon that the Müller oratorio commences.

While not ranking with the creations of the great masters, it would be hard to imagine a composition better adapted to the needs of the play than this Swiss oratorio. It lends itself very readily to illustration by tableaux; it seems to express remarkably well the feeling of the scriptural scenes, to catch the biblical atmosphere, and while at times inspiringly dramatic and always deeply expressive, it never fails to retain a distinctly religious character. As to the performance itself, considering the rough material at the disposal of the management, the results both in the acted scenes and the numerous tableaux are little short of marvelous. In the acting, while at times we feel that it might have been more effective, yet by keeping the artists well within their limitations, anything like a fiasco has certainly been avoided. In the tableaux the pictures are well conceived and the figures in general well posed. If we single out any one figure we at once notice a greater or less degree of stiffness; but looking at the pictures as a whole this seems to disappear.

Starting with the plots of the high priests we work slowly along until we reach the first climax in the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. Then come the various accusations and trials before Pilate and the final yielding of that leader, dominated by his idolatry to power, as expressed in the person of "the Cæsar." Following

these are the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the road to Golgotha, each scene showing an increase in intensity over its predecessors and all leading up to the great final tragedy of the crucifixion.

By the time this point is reached there are few among the audience who are not deeply moved by the great human tragedy being enacted before them. In some respects it may be unpleasant; for it is terrible and heart-rending in its awfulness, but it is none the less impressive and dramatic.

From the commencement of the designs of the high council we see the fated cloud of the Passion slowly but surely gathering around and above the central figure toward whom all our sympathies are strongly drawn. When the arrest comes, we feel that the breaking of the cloud is near; but the trials before Pilate bid us hope—although against hope—and thus keep up the suspense. When the delivery by Pilate to the Jews is made, giving up hope, our inclination is to flee; but some strange influence keeps us seated throughout the preparatory tortures and the touching parting with the Virgin. As the crucifixion is slowly consummated, the desire to escape, with its accompanying inability, increases, until the strain would be unbearable were it not for the sudden change in the music which breathes of brightness to come, and keeps us up through the painful descent from the cross and placing in the sepulchre.

The nearer the Resurrection comes, the brighter and more hopeful grows the music, and when it actually bursts upon us, the tableau seems entirely inadequate.

But that matters little; the halleluia music is swelling forth; the fearful tragedy is over; our hearts are freed from the burden of past sorrow; we are carried away by the spirit of the moment beyond criticisms of faulty stage mechanism. The same remark applies to the Ascension. A village stage fails utterly to manage such a scene in any satisfactory way; but we hardly notice it. The charm of the resurrection and ascension of the down-trodden hero of mankind is upon us, and we are only too glad to yield ourselves and our imagination to it.

VII.

The Italian Renaissance.

It was toward the close of the fourteenth century that the new light of the Renaissance first arose in Italy and beamed in brilliant splendor from the intellectual summits of the time. The mist through which the middle ages had looked on classical antiquity was beginning now to clear away, and to the anxious, searching eye appeared an unexpected fullness of the richest life in ever-widening circumstance, while that which was already known, now being seen in clearer outlines, took possession of mind and heart with irresistible might. The powerful movement of that epoch, which prepared a regeneration of thought and culture for mankind in Europe, is connected mainly with three great names—Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

Dante.

The relation of these three men to antiquity is as different as their character and genius. Dante's immense originality and productive energy, united to a will immovable and conscious of its aim, fixed the

assimilative powers of his mind within very definite bounds. And besides, he was only acquainted with classical antiquity through the narrow circle of Latin works current in the middle ages. He was, therefore, only able to appropriate from the ancients what corresponded with his own ideas of the world, or what was suited to advance his poetical or practical aims. But with the depth and breadth of his genius, and with the greatness of his character, this little, indeed, implies much; and though he has not extended our theoretical knowledge of antiquity, though he cannot be numbered among the creators of classical philology, he was, on the other hand, the founder of a new poetry inspired by the spirit of antiquity. As the father and master of Italian poetry, the creator of the *Divine Comedy* was not merely indebted to the Roman poets for maxims of worldly wisdom, mythological figures and poetic passages and motives; he was also indebted to the works of the ancients for his just perception of form and for his high aim. From them he learned the secret of putting deep subjects into classical form. In the first canto of the *Inferno* he says to the shade of Virgil: "Thou art my master and my author; from thee alone I derived the style which has done me honor."

The melody of Dante's verse, the force and pregnancy in the mighty rush of his diction, the rigorous choice of expression and of the position of every word, the art of placing with a few touches, sometimes with a single stroke, a plastic image before the mind—all these qualities show us the pupil of the ancients; a pupil, indeed, who in power of imagination and depth

of meaning far excels the Latin masters. But it was in their school that he conceived the idea of what a work of art should really be; it was from them he gained that higher view of the poet's mission as it is laid down in the Roman word *Vates*. And not only as artist, but also as a man and thinker, did Dante feel the vast significance of the antique conceptions. The idea of the old Roman manly virtue, the *virtus*, forms a living power in his soul. The antique conception of the state as the father of its citizens was seized by him in all its greatness as by no other in his age. Since, therefore, everything was worked out in his mind into harmony and into the closest connection with a great and minutely elaborated system of mediæval Christian ideas, we find a result that stands alone of its kind and can scarcely be expressed in words. Standing in the centre of mediæval culture, and one of the most zealous defenders of authority in church and state, Dante is at the same time the first great representative of individualism, which has hardly ever found a haughtier expression than in his words. By the great divine work of his life Dante gave the crowning termination and the finished expression to mediæval ideas, and at the same time founded the poetry of modern times.

Petrarch.

Petrarch's importance in the history of culture can be, perhaps, most vividly realized by a comparison. Petrarch was the Voltaire of the fourteenth century, the prophet of human learning, as Voltaire was of

human emancipation and enlightenment. The similarity in the exterior and interior lives of the two men is much greater than may appear at a superficial glance. Both stand in the centre of the intellectual movement of their age, and in close connection with their most prominent contemporaries and with crowned heads. Both received in their lifetime the highest recognition, or rather should we say, the highest adoration, as the dearest goal of their ambition, the laurel crown. In both we admire the manysidedness of their talents, their extraordinary powers of assimilation, their restless activity of mind. Both show a sensibility and vanity developed to the same degree, and both possessed equally the gift of genius. If we are astonished at Voltaire's gigantic intellect, by which he is able to deduce the practical side from the most difficult problems, and the spirit by which he gives the most simple and striking form to his thoughts; we are, on the other hand, astonished at Petrarch's sympathetic intuition, which enabled him, from absolutely inadequate models and materials, to bring to recognition a buried world in all its vast importance to human culture. Both Petrarch and Voltaire were filled with enthusiasm for their mission, and dominated by the desire of making proselytes. Both knew how to strike various tones in their writings; Petrarch, however, generally speaks as a poet and a prophet, Voltaire as a philosopher and a man of the world. In both a theatrical trait can be perceived—in Petrarch, indeed, more than in Voltaire, because the ideality of his aims and the high demands he made on the spiritual and moral perfection of man

formed the most glaring contrast to the weakness of his own character. His diaries and letters reveal the strange union of a remarkable self-knowledge with a continued deception of himself and of others.

Petrarch was the first who threw himself with complete abandon into the ancient classic world of thought and form, and who pressed forward to a clear understanding of antiquity, as far as the inadequate and almost solely Roman materials at his hand enabled him to do so. He was the first who undertook in real earnest, who had both the will and the power to revive antiquity, not only for himself, but for his contemporaries and for posterity. In him the finest feeling and the most unbounded enthusiasm for the beautiful creations of antiquity, and for the importance of the ideas contained in them, were united to an unprejudiced scientific perception and the gift of a rare and vigorous diction. An opponent of astrology and other mediæval superstitions, an enemy of scholasticism and a warm admirer of Plato, a zealous collector and exponent of Latin manuscripts and other ancient relics, an elegant writer of Latin poetry and prose, he originated both the intellectual worship of the ancient world and the learned science of philology.

As an Italian lyrist, Petrarch succeeded to the inheritance of the Provençal troubadours and of the Florentine school—culminating in Dante—however much he emphasized his independence. But numerous motives in his poems, frequently also his expressed sentiments and ways of thinking, and, above all, the style he employs, reveal the pupil of the ancients.

Petrarch's lyrics are less spontaneous, and on the whole less deep than Dante's poetry of the same kind; they are also less abstract and in their manner of expression less hard to understand, but they are always grand in their wealth of thought, as in their perfection of form; they present an artistic work of the highest kind, to which succeeding generations have looked up with admiration, and which became a model for the following lyrists, not only of Italy, but, in the heyday of the Renaissance, of almost all the civilized nations of western Europe.

Boccaccio.

Boccaccio, the third of the "great Etruscan three," was of a very different nature. He was altogether a child of this world, endowed with a gay and sensual disposition, with a great eagerness for knowledge and with an insatiable desire and capacity for story-telling, in character an all-around and amiable personality. Stimulated as a student of classical antiquity by Petrarch, and as a poet by the influence of Dante, he possessed neither the intuitive historic glance of the former, nor the immense depth and poetic force of the latter. But notwithstanding his admiration for his two great predecessors, he managed to maintain his independence sufficiently to be able, in many essential points, to follow out his own inventive course, and with his unwearied diligence and astonishing fertility he attained two great results in poetry and learning.

His historical and mythological writings in the Latin tongue, especially his fifteen books, *De Gene-*



STORIES FROM BOCCACCIO
After an original drawing by Jacques Wagrez

Translated by E. V. Rieu
Illustrated by Jacques Wagrez
The Folio Society
London and New York

Scene from the Decamerone of Boccaccio, who, by the highly developed art of his narration, gave a new significance to the cyclical form of tale-writing, once popular among the Italians.



alogiis Deorum Gentilium, were followed up by a period of the most diligent collecting of philological works. In his Italian epics he attempted, with little success, to imitate the style and tone of ancient poetry by using classical subjects. On the other hand, he succeeded in depicting with great truthfulness nicely conceived psychological conditions and in carrying the reader along with him by his vivid portrayal of the passions. He also created for the growing epic poetry of his country some important elements for its poetical technology; in particular, he gained for it the strophe, the ottava rima, which is best suited to its movement, and which in the hands of Ariosto became such an excellent vehicle for a rich and brilliant fancy. Boccaccio himself by no means sounded all the secrets of the octave, for indeed, his verses, as a rule, are only mediocre. Rhythm is for him a robe in which he moves with ease, but not with any special grace, while Dante is as much at home in it as in his skin. Boccaccio, therefore, owes the greater part of his fame to Italian prose, which, in spite of many Latinisms and a too artificial construction of his periods, is full of color, life, energy and grace, and, in its excellencies as in its defects, is the purest exponent of the intellectual character of this clever and imaginative poet.

In prose form, which he disfigured, indeed, at first by too great a profusion of images, he then created the Italian romance as well as the biographical essay, and gave a new significance to the cyclical form of tale-writing—in his *Aminto* by the idyllic framework and the interspersed eclogues, in his *Decamerone* by the

poetic inventions employed and the highly developed art of its narration and characterization.

Study of Classical Antiquity.

The literary influence which finally transformed the growths of the Religious drama into the national dramas of Europe, was in a word the influence of the Renaissance. Among the remains of classical antiquity which were studied, translated and imitated, those of the drama necessarily held a prominent place. Never altogether lost sight of, they now became subjects of devoted research and models for careful imitation, first in their own, then in modern, tongues; and these essentially literary endeavors came more and more into contact with, and gradually acquired more control over, the already existing entertainments of the stage. Thus the stream of the modern drama, whose source and contributories have been described, was brought back into the ancient bed, from which its flow diverged into a number of national courses, unequal in impetus and strength, and varying in accordance with the manifold conditions of their progress.

Inferiority of Italian Drama.

The priority in this, as in other aspects of the Renaissance, belongs to Italy. In ultimate achievement, the Italian drama fell short of the results obtained elsewhere, notwithstanding that the Italian language had the advantage of closest relationship to the

Latin, and that the genius of the Italian people has at all times shown a predilection for the drama. The cause may be due, in a measure, to the absence from Italian national life, during a long period, and especially during the rise and earlier promise of Italian dramatic literature, of those lofty and potent impulses of popular feeling to which a national drama owes so much of its strength. This absence was due partly to the peculiarities of the Italian character, partly to the political and ecclesiastical experiences Italy was fated to undergo. The Italians were strangers to the enthusiasm of patriotism, which was as the breath in the nostrils to the English in the Elizabethan age, as well as to the single-minded religious fervor which identified Spain with the spirit of the Catholic revival. The clear-sightedness of the Italians had something to do with this, for they were too intelligent to believe in tyrants, and too free from illusions to deliver up their minds to the priests. The chilling and enervating effects of foreign domination, such as no Western people with a history and a civilization like those of Italy has ever experienced, did the rest, and for many generations rendered impotent the higher efforts of dramatic art. No basis was permanently found for a really national tragedy; while comedy, after turning from the direct imitation of Latin models to a more popular form, lost itself in an abandoned immorality of tone and in reckless insolence of invective against particular classes of society. Though its productive period long continued, the poetic drama more and more concentrated its efforts upon subordinate or subsidiary species, artificial in origin and

decorative in purpose, and surrendered its substance to the overpowering aids of music, dancing, and spectacle. Only a single form of the Italian drama, the improvised comedy, remained truly national; and this was of its nature dissociated from higher literary effort. The revival of Italian tragedy in later times is due partly to the imitation of French models, partly to the endeavor of a brilliant genius to infuse into his art the historical and political spirit. Comedy likewise attained to new growths of considerable significance, when it was sought to accommodate its popular forms to the representation of real life in a wider range, and again to render it more poetical in accordance with the tendencies of modern romanticism.

The regular Italian drama, in both its tragic and its comic branches, began with a reproduction, in the Latin language, of classical models; but tragedy in its beginnings showed a tendency to treat themes of national historical interest. Two of the earliest tragedies of which we hear, were written by the Paduan historian Mussato, about 1300, both being copies of Seneca; but while the one treated a classical theme, the other dealt with the history of a famous tyrant of the author's native city. In the next century events of recent or contemporary history were similarly dealt with, but the majority of Latin dramas were doubtless written to suit the tastes of the friends and patrons of the Italian renaissance, who, like Lorenzo the Magnificent, wished to domesticate the heathen gods and goddesses on a stage hitherto occupied by the sacred figures of Christian belief. Such were the imitations and translations of

Greek and Latin tragedies and comedies by Bishop Martirano, the friend of Lorenzo's son, Pope Leo X; the famous *Progne* of G. Corraro, the nephew of an earlier pope; and the efforts of Pomponius Laetus, who, with the aid of Cardinal Riario, sought to revive the ancient theatre, especially that of Plautus and Terence, at Rome. Many Latin comedies are mentioned from the fifteenth century, during which, as during its predecessor, Latin continued the dominant language of the stage in Italy.

Early in the sixteenth century, tragedy began to be written in the native tongue; but it retained from the first, and never wholly lost, the impress of its origin. Whatever the source of its subjects, whether of classical origin, derived from native romance, or original invention, they were all treated with a predilection for the horrible, inspired by the example of Seneca, and encouraged by national taste. The chorus, stationary on the stage as in old Roman tragedy, was not reduced to a merely occasional appearance between the acts till the beginning of the seventeenth century, or ousted altogether from the tragic drama till the earlier half of the eighteenth. Thus the changes undergone were long confined chiefly to versification and the choice of themes; nor was it until the last century of its course, more than the after-growth of an after-growth.

Absence of a National Drama.

Alone among the great nations of the world, Italy stands in the unenviable position of possessing no drama

at the same time national and literary. In the drama of European countries three main classes may be distinguished. First, there is the rude popular play, entirely a creation of the people, such as the buffooneries of the Dionysiac festival, out of which the Athenian drama grew, or the dramatic exhibitions at fairs of itinerant actors barely distinguishable from the mountebanks. Performances of this nature have probably existed in every nation endowed with the rudiments of culture. Second, when these crude beginnings are elevated by men of genius into the sphere of art, and become literary without ceasing to be popular. This is true national drama, when the pulses of the poet and the people beat in full unison, and of which Greece, England and Spain have given to the world the most brilliant examples. Third, we have the artificial drama, written by men of culture for men of culture, but neglecting, or at least failing to reach the heart of the people. With the exception of the comedies of Goldoni and Gozzi, which belong to a later period than that which we are now considering, the whole of the Italian drama possessing any literary pretensions belongs to the last of these classes, though accompanied by a lower order of dramatic composition, which may be regarded as popular. In the early days we have the *Rappresentazioni*, at a later period the *Commedia dell'Arte*; but neither is, strictly speaking, literature.

It is indeed somewhat surprising that a nation so dramatically gifted as the Italian should not only have never possessed a national drama, but should have no dramatic writer worthy to be ranked among the great

masters of the art. Lively, emotional, capable of being worked up to the most violent degrees of passion, at the same time observant, sagacious, reflective members of a community comprising every variety of character and profession, and inheritors of a history replete with moving and tragic incidents, Italians should seem to have wanted no requisite for the creation of a flourishing stage. Prolific they were, indeed; nearly five thousand plays were written between 1500 and 1700, but of these there are not a score which enjoy any considerable reputation outside of Italy, or which, whatever their literary merit, can be considered characteristically Italian. One reason was probably the remarkable development of Italian culture at an early period, as compared with that of other European nations. The ablest men had become fully acquainted with Seneca and Terence, and looked upon them as painters looked upon Raphael, or sculptors upon Phidias. They deemed them the norm of excellence, and condemned themselves to a sterile imitation, which might, and often did, possess high literary merit, but which was entirely estranged from popular sympathies. Men like Politian and Pontano, who might have created a national drama if they could have trusted their own instincts, were deterred from producing anything at variance with the canons in which they themselves believed. It must, however, be admitted that the classical school, with all its defects, was vastly in advance of the rude, amorphous beginnings of the romantic drama in other countries. It nevertheless remains to be explained why, throughout their entire history, with a few marked

exceptions in particular departments, the Italians have never had a drama that they could justly call their own.

Inception of Modern Drama.

In the beginning, indeed, the Italian drama had a distinct nationality, with frequent representations of public events upon the stage, quite in the spirit of Shakespeare's historical plays. Two types may be discriminated—one adhering very closely to that of the *Rappresentazioni*, and composed in the vernacular; the other following classical models, and in Latin. To the latter belongs the very tedious play of Carlo Verardi on the fall of Granada, performed before Cardinal Riario in 1492; but the lost dramatic chronicle of the usurpations and downfall of the house of Borgia, a very remarkable composition, acted before the Duke of Urbino on the recovery of his states in 1504, seems rather to have belonged to the former class. To this type also is allied the first Italian drama of genuine literary merit, the *Orfeo* of Politian, which may be termed a pastoral melodrama with a tragic climax. The dialogue is mostly in octave stanzas, as in the *Rappresentazioni*, and the object is evidently rather to delight the spectators by a rapid succession of scenes admitting of musical accompaniment than to "purge the soul by pity and terror." Slight as is this juvenile work of Politian, it is the work of a poet, and written with a swing and rush which recall the lyrical parts of the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. It indicates what the *Rappresentazioni* might have become but for the competition of

the more classical type of drama, and seems a prelude to the thoroughly national species of composition which arose in the seventeenth and became common in the eighteenth century—the opera.

The Italian stage had thus made a respectable beginning with the drama a century before any drama worthy of the name existed in England. The disappointment that followed such auspicious promise may be ascribed in great measure to the want of a representative public and a centre of social life. The emulation of a number of independent cities, so favorable to the development of the fine arts, prevented the growth of a national feeling, so essential to a national drama. The political circumstances of these communities, moreover, were inimical to the existence of a popular stage. Theatrical representations remained the amusement of courts, and when the general public was allowed to participate the play was so enveloped in show and spectacle as to appear the least part of the entertainment. It was not possible that under such circumstances the drama could deviate much from conventional models. Tragedy continued to be composed after the pattern of Seneca, an imitation of an imitation. Comedy, though also in bondage to classical precedents, could not avoid depicting contemporary manners, and hence displays more vitality and vigor.

Trissino.

Latin plays had been written by Italians from the beginning of the fifteenth century, and had included

comedies, now lost, by Petrarch and Æneas Sylvius. The first Italian tragedies, worthy of the name, were composed for the entertainment of the Court of Ferrara, and were written in the octave stanza or *terza rima*. No genius could have adapted this form to the exigencies of the stage, and a great step was taken when, in 1515, Trissino wrote his tragedy of *Sophonisba* in blank verse, retaining nothing of the lyrical element but the chorus. Though the piece marks an era, it is entirely lacking in poetry and pathos, and the best that can be said of it is that it would have made a good framework for some abler hand to have clothed with substance.

Trissino was a man of immense erudition and laborious intellect, who devoted himself to questions of grammatical and literary accuracy, studying the critics of antiquity with indefatigable diligence, and seeking to establish canons for the regulation of correct Italian composition. He was by no means deficient in originality of aim, and professed himself the pioneer of a new species of poetry, setting himself to supply the deficiencies of Italian literature by producing an epic in the heroic style and a tragedy that should compare with those of Athens. The *Italia Liberata* and the *Sophonisba*, meritorious but lifeless exercises, which entirely lacked the genius of poetry, were the result of these ambitious aims. In his works, more than in those of any other writer, it may be seen how the failure of Italian tragedy was inseparable from its artificial origin. It was the conscious product of cultivated persons, who aimed at nothing nobler than the imitation of the ancients and the observance of inapplicable rules. The

dramatic unities, as laid down by Aristotle, were not intended for all time, or for the modern drama.

Sixteenth Century Tragedies.

Trissino had many imitators, all of them devoid of qualifications, except the ambition for literary distinction. But ambition alone would not suffice, and no vestige of originality appears in any of them, except for Sperone's innovation of mingling lyrical metres with blank verse—a change by no means to be commended. Giovanni Rucellai produced his *Rosmunda* almost contemporaneously with the *Sophonisba*, and it was acted before Leo X in the Rucellai gardens during a papal visit to Florence. The chief merit of the *Rosmunda* is its brevity; but it has the fatal fault of being a story told in scenes and dialogues, instead of an action moving and expanding through a series of connected incidents. The same defect appears in Sperone's *Canace*, the story of which is horrible, while the situations show how little of dramatic genius the author brought to bear upon the hideous theme he had selected. Among other tragedies of the age are the *Matiamne* of Ludovico Dolce and the *Orbecche* of Cinthio, the novelist, whose *Epitia* contains the rude germ of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. At a somewhat later date tragedy was attempted by a true poet of great genius, who would assuredly have produced something memorable under favorable circumstances. But the composition of Tasso's *Torrismondo*, commenced in his youth, was long interrupted, and the

play was not completed until 1586, while under the depressing influences of his Mantuan exile. Hence it is wanting in energy, and, as Carducci remarks, "Tasso is too much of an eclectic, striving by a combination of the advantages of all styles to supply the one indispensable gift of poetical inspiration which misfortune had all but extinguished."

Italian Comedy.

The first Italian comedies, like the tragedies, were written in rhyme. One early example is entitled to notice, both on account of the subject and as the work of an excellent poet, the *Timone* of Boiardo. It is little more than a translation from Lucian's *Dialogues*, yet it was probably the channel through which Shakespeare gained his acquaintance with that work as revealed in his *Timon of Athens*.

The humanistic influences of the fifteenth century were hardly less favorable to national comedy at the outset than they had been to national tragedy, a fact to be greatly regretted, since it helped to check the growth of a national drama. We find that, at the close of that century, it was common to recite the plays of Plautus and Terence in their original language, though later they were translated into Italian for audiences unacquainted with the ancient classics. The history of Italian comedy, as a recognized form of art, may be dated from the *Calandra* of Bernardo Dovizio, afterward Cardinal Bibbiena, which was first performed at Urbino, probably in 1508. It makes little attempt at

delineation of character, but achieved immediate success by reproducing in the wittiest of vernacular the inventions of Plautus seasoned with the humor of Boccaccio. The plot is from the *Menachmi*, the source of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, but Dovizio's idea of making the indistinguishable twins brother and sister enhances the comic effect at the expense of the morality—a matter of little consequence in those days. From Urbino the comedy passed through all the courts of Italy, finding the greatest favor at Rome, where Leo X more than once ordered its representation.

Leo the Tenth.

Leo had an insatiable appetite for scenic shows, and comedies of the new Latinizing style were his favorite recreation. But he also invited the Sienese company of the Rozzi, who played only farces, every year to Rome; nor was he averse to even less artistic buffoonery, as may be gathered from many of the stories told about him. In 1513 Leo opened a theatre upon the Capitol, and here in 1519, surrounded with two thousand spectators, he witnessed an exhibition of Ariosto's *Suppositi*. We have a description of the scene from the pen of an eye-witness, who relates how the pope sat at the entrance to the gallery leading into the theatre, and admitted with his benediction those whom he thought worthy of partaking of the night's amusement. When the house was full, he took his throne in the orchestra, and sat, with eyeglass in hand, to watch the play. Raphael had painted the scenery, which doubtless was

extremely beautiful. Leo's behavior scandalized the foreign ambassadors, who thought it indecorous that a pope should not only listen to the equivocal jests of the prologue, but also laugh immoderately at them. As usual, the inter-acts consisted of vocal and instrumental concerts, with ballets on classical and allegorical subjects.

Ariosto.

The great success of Dovizio's comedy tended to encourage rivalry, and especially by Ariosto and Machiavelli, men of vastly superior talent, and with a decided gift for satire. In the year following the exhibition of the *Calandra*, Ariosto produced the *Cassaria*, a comedy of intrigue on the Plautine model, and the same description is applicable to his other comedies, the *Suppositi*, the *Lena*, the *Negromante*, and the *Scolastica*. In all except the *Negromante* the action turns upon the stratagems of a knavish servant to obtain for his master the money indispensable for the gratification of his amorous desires. This style of comedy requires a well-contrived plot, and the maintenance of the interest throughout by a series of ingenious surprises and unforeseen incidents. In these Ariosto fully attains his object. Writing for the amusement of a court, he does not care to stray from the conventions which he knows will satisfy, and his pieces afford no measure of the success he might have attained if he had appealed to the public and essayed to depict Italian society as it really existed. One of the characters is exceedingly lifelike—the accommodating Dominican in

the *Scolastica*, who, armed with authority from the pope, is ready to commute the fulfilment of an inconvenient vow into the performance of some good work profitable to his order. The *Lena* presents the best picture of Ferrarese society, and in a light far more natural, less lurid, and less partial, than that which Machiavelli and Aretino shed upon the vices of their times.

Machiavelli.

Released from prison after the overthrow of his party and the loss of his political position in 1512, Machiavelli found solace in the composition of the *Mandragola*, or *Mandrake*, a piece acted before the pope. Its cynicism is worse than its immorality, the plot consisting in the stratagem by which an innocent young wife is persuaded to admit a lover; all the personages, including the husband, who is himself deceived, coöperating for this purpose. Disagreeable as is the situation, it is probably founded upon fact; and at all events the play is no pale copy of Plautus or Terence, but full of consistent and strongly individualized characters, and scenes of the most drastically comic effect. The portrait of the rascally father confessor is particularly vigorous. In this comedy Machiavelli put forth all his strength, and repulsive as it may be to modern tastes, its power is indubitable, offering a most vivid description of Florentine life from its author's point of view. A few more plays of equal merit would have gone far to elevate the tone of the Italian stage; but no successor to Machiavelli appeared; his *Clizia* is little more than

a paraphrase of the *Casina* of Plautus, and the *Commedia in Prosa* and *Commedia in Versi*, commonly ascribed to him, are of doubtful authenticity.

If Machiavelli had devoted his talents to the drama, instead of to politics, he would doubtless have won fame as a writer of comedy. In novelty of plot, delineation of character, and strength and vivacity of dialogue, the little that he has left us is far superior to all that Italy had then, and perhaps has since produced. In perusing his works we cannot but recognize the ability of the master who conceived them, the elevation from which he judges the beings whom he has depicted with so much truth, and his profound contempt for the duplicity and hypocrisy which he exposes. In other fields of literature he shows the touch of a master's hand. His tale of *Belfagor*, or the devil who takes refuge in hell to avoid a scold, has been translated into all European languages, and remodeled in French by La Fontaine. His poems are remarkable rather for vigor of thought than for harmony and grace of style and expression, some being merely history in verse and others burlesque or satirical fragments. But the pleasantries of the author are usually mingled with gall, and when he indulges in humor, it is always in derision of the human race. It was thus, for instance, that he wrote the Carnival songs, to be recited by different troops of masks, each dance having a song or ode appropriated to its character and disguise. In the manner in which he introduces this popular feast, preceded by a chorus of demons, we recognize all the gloom and moroseness of the great Italian cynic.

Driven from the mansions of immortal bliss,
Angels no more, the fate
Of pride was ours.
Yet claim we here, in this
Your rude and ravaged state,
More torn with faction and fierce powers
Of vengeance than our realms of hate,
The rule we lost in Heaven, o'er man below,
Famine, war, blood, fierce cold and fiercer fire;
Lo! on your mortal heads
These vials pour our hands that never tire;
And we, while the glad season spreads
The feast and dance, are with you now,
And must with you remain,
To foster grief and pain.
And plague you with fresh woes and crimes that bring
forth woe.

Pietro Aretino.

In connection with Machiavelli may be mentioned one of his contemporaries who acquired almost an equal, though an infamous celebrity, and that is Pietro Aretino. Those who are not acquainted with the works of either regard them both with equal horror; the first, as the abettor of political crime, and the other, as having made a boast of his impiety, immorality and profligacy. Such, however, was the power of wit, and the favor shown to poets in the sixteenth century, that Charles V, Francis I, and the greatest men of the age, loaded Aretino with honors, and admitted him to their intimacy. An acknowledged friend of Leo X and Clement VII, he was recommended to Paul III by his son, the duke of Parma, as deserving of a cardinal's hat, and had nearly attained that distinction, on the death

of Paul, from his successor, Julius III. He composed during a long life (1492 to 1557) a great number of works, which are scarcely read at the present day. Some of these owed their reputation to their extreme licentiousness; others, to the caustic satire with which he attacked his powerful enemies; many, which were purchased at an extraordinary price by reigning sovereigns, are filled with the most base and degrading flatteries; and others, in no small number, are devotional pieces, which the author, an enemy to every religious faith and to all morals, wrote only because they brought him a larger sum of money. Notwithstanding this profligacy of mind and heart, Aretino received from his contemporaries the epithet of *Il Divino*. Possessed of assurance of every description, he adopted this title himself, repeated it on all occasions, and attached it to his signature as a person attaches a title to his name.

His life was sullied by every species of vice. His enemies, who found they could not wound the honor of a man who professed to have none, were obliged to have recourse to personal chastisement, which, in consequence, he frequently underwent. At other times he drew on himself more serious attacks. At Rome, a Bolognese gentleman struck him with his poinard, and lamed him for life. Pietro Strozzi, a marshal of France, against whom he had written some satirical pieces, threatened to have him assassinated in his bed; and the unfortunate Aretino shut himself up in his home, in inexpressible terror, and thus led a prisoner's life, until Strozzi had quitted Italy. Tintoretto, whom he had attacked with his accustomed virulence, ac-

cidentally meeting him near his house, and feigning ignorance of what he had written, told him that he had long wished for an opportunity of painting his portrait. He led him into his house, placed him on a chair, and suddenly presenting a pistol, advanced against him in a menacing attitude. "How now, Giacomo!" cried the terrified poet. "I am only taking your measure," gravely answered the painter; and added, in the same tone, "I find you just four and a half pistol lengths." He then bade him instantly depart, an injunction which Aretino lost no time in obeying. It seemed, indeed, probable that he would have died either by the dagger or bodily chastisement, but he was reserved for a lighter death. He had some sisters at Venice, whose lives were as dissolute as his own. A person was one day recounting to him some of their amours, and he found them so comic that he threw himself back with violence in his chair. The chair fell backwards, his head struck against the marble floor, and he died instantaneously, at the age of sixty-five.

Had Aretino been a writer of genius, Italy might have owed to his audacity and self-reliance the starting-point for her national dramatic art. He was on the right path, but he lacked the skill to tread it. His comedies, loosely put together, with no constructive vigor in their plots and no grasp of psychology in their characters, are a series of powerfully-written scenes, piquant dialogues, and effective situations rather than comedies in the higher sense of the word. "They depict," says one of his critics, "the great world from the standpoint of the servants' hall. They are the work of a low-minded man,

who could see nothing but the baser traits of the society around him, but saw these clearly, and also saw no reason why he should not blazon what he saw. Hence his usefulness is in the ratio of his offensiveness."

Many comedies of considerable merit succeeded Machiavelli's, among which may be mentioned those of Firenzuola, who followed Roman precedents, and of Cecchi, and Gelli, and Grazzini, who to a considerable extent disengaged themselves from tradition. Angelo Beolco struck upon a new vein in the delineation of rustic life, involving the employment of dialect; and, near the end of the century, the life of the people was represented with extreme vividness by Buonarotti, nephew of Michael Angelo, in his *Fiera* and *Tancia*. Nicolo Franco, after being brought up in the school of Aretino, had a furious quarrel with him; but attacked, with no less effrontery than his rival, the government and the public morals. This he did so fiercely and persistently that, to put a stop to his pasquinades, Pio V caused him to be hanged.

It would be difficult to render an account of the comedies produced by the Italians in the sixteenth century, or to catalogue their authors. A computation has been made which gives the plays known to students at several thousands; but in spite of this extraordinary richness in comic literature, Italy cannot boast of a really great comedian. No poet arose to carry the art onward from the point already reached when Aretino left the stage. The neglect that fell on those innumerable comedies was not wholly undeserved. It is true that their scenes suggested brilliant episodes to French

and English playwrights of celebrity; it is true that the historian of manners finds in them an almost inexhaustible store of matter, but they are literary lucubrations rather than the spontaneous expression of a vivid nationality. Nor have they the subordinate merit of dealing in a scientific spirit with the cardinal vices and follies of society. We miss the original plots, the powerful modeling of character, the philosophical insight, which would have entitled him to a high position in the domain of comedy.

Modern Arcadia.

The transition from the middle ages to the Renaissance was marked by a new ideal, which exercised a powerful influence over Italian literature. The sensibilities of men athirst for some consoling fancy took refuge in the dream of a past golden age. On one side the ideal was purely literary, reflecting the artistic instincts of a people enthusiastic for form, and affording scope for their imitative activity; but, on the other, it corresponded to a deep and genuine Italian feeling. That sympathy with rustic life, that love of nature humanized by industry, that delight in the villa, the garden, the vineyard, and the grove, which modern Italians inherited from their Roman ancestors, gave reality to what might otherwise have been but artificial. Vespasiano's anecdotes of Cosimo de' Medici pruning his own fruit-trees; Ficino's description of the village feasts at Monteverchio; Flamminio's picture of his Latin farm; Alderti's tenderness in gazing at the autumn fields—all these have the ring of genuine emotion. For men who

thus loved the country, the age of gold was no mere fiction, and Arcady was a land of possibilities.

What has been well called *la volutta idillica*—the sensuous love of beauty, finding fit expression in the idyll—formed a marked characteristic of Renaissance art and literature. Boccaccio developed this motive in all of his works which dealt with the customs of society. Poliziano and Lorenzo devoted their best poetry to the praise of rural bliss, the happiness of shepherd folk anterior to life in cities. The same theme recurs in the Latin poems of the humanists; it pervades the ode, the sonnet, and takes to itself the chief honors of the drama.

In rural bliss a literary Eldorado was discovered which was destined to attract explorers through the next three centuries. Arcadia became the wonder-world of noble youths and maidens, at Madrid no less than at Ferrara, in Elizabeth's London and in Marie Antoinette's Versailles. After engaging the genius of Tasso and Guarini, Spenser and Sidney, it degenerated into quaint conventionality. Companions of Turenne and Marlborough told tales of pastoral love to maids of honor near the throne. Frederick and Maria Theresa's courtiers simpered and sighed like Dresden-china swains and shepherdesses. Crooked sticks with ribbons at the tops were fashionable appendages to red-heeled shoes and powdered perukes. Few phenomena in the history of literature are more curious than the prolonged prosperity and wide-spread fascination of this Arcadian romance. Yet, as with other forms of the pastoral drama, it has gone as entirely out of fashion as have

the simpering madonnas and impossible Christs which formed almost the only art of the middle ages.

Sannazzaro.

To Jacopo Sannazzaro belongs the glory of having first explored Arcadia, mapped out its borders, and called it after his own name. He is the Columbus of this visionary hemisphere. His ancestors, who appear to have been originally Spaniards, settled in a village of Pavia called S. Nazzaro, whence they took their name. The poet's immediate forefather was said to have followed Charles of Durezzo in 1380 to the south of Italy, where he received fields and lands. Jacopo was born at Naples in 1458, and, as a youth, made such rapid progress in both Greek and Latin scholarship as soon to be found worthy of admission to Pontano's academy. The friendship between the master and pupil lasted without interruption up to the time of the death of the former in 1503. Their Latin poems abound in passages which testify to a strong mutual regard, and the life-size effigies of both may still be seen together in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples. Distinction in scholarship was at that time a sure title to consideration at the Neapolitan court. Sannazzaro attached himself to the person of Frederick, the second son of Ferdinand I; and when this prince succeeded to the throne he conferred upon the poet a pension and a beautiful villa. When Frederick was forced to retire to France in 1501, Sannazzaro accompanied his royal master into exile, only returning to Naples after the ex-king's death, and

there he continued to reside until his own death in 1530. The *Arcadia* was begun at Nocera in his youth, continued during his residence in France, and finished in Naples.

The *Arcadia* blends autobiography and fable in a narrative of very languid interest. Loose in construction and uncertain in aim, it lacks the clearness and consistency of perfect art. And yet it is a masterpiece; because its author contrived to make it reflect one of the deepest and most permanent emotions of his time. The whole pastoral ideal—the yearning after a golden age, the beauty and pathos of the country, the felicity of simple folk, the details of rustic life, the charm of woods and gardens, the mythology of Pan and the Satyrs, of nymphs and fauns—all this is expressed in a series of pictures idyllically graceful and artistic. For English readers the *Arcadia* has a special interest, since it begot the longer and more ambitious work of Sir Philip Sidney.

Tasso.

Other pastoral dramas followed in quick succession, but none above mediocrity, until we come to Tasso's *Aminta*, published in 1573. Few novel experiments in literature have enjoyed a more immediate or more permanent success, and numerous as were the *Aminta*'s imitators, its superiority has never been seriously challenged. It is, indeed, deficient in the rich poetry of its English rival, the *Faithful Shepherdess*, "as inferior, poetically speaking," says Leigh Hunt, "as a lawn with a few trees on it is to the depths of a forest."

But he confesses its superiority in "true dramatic skill, and flesh and blood," for it is very far removed from the insipidity usually associated with pastoral compositions. It has also more of the genuine yearning for the golden age, the spirit which inspires Keat's *Endymion*, than is found in the fanciful dramas of Fletcher or Ben Jonson. "Its central motive," says Symonds in his *History of the Renaissance*, "is the contrast between the actual world of ambition, treachery and sordid strife, and the ideal world of pleasure, loyalty and tranquil ease."

Guarini.

If the supremacy of the *Aminta* has ever been disputed, it is by the *Pastor Fido* of Giovanni Battista Guarini. The descendant of a Veronese family already distinguished in letters, Guarini was, like Tasso, attached to the court of the duke of Ferrara; but, unlike Tasso, he was a man of the world, and was employed in several important missions, especially to solicit the crown of Poland for his master. Like most of the duke's literary protégés, he became estranged from him, and spent the later part of his life in roaming from court to court in quest of employment, and litigating with his children and the world at large. His disposition was quarrelsome; literary disputes had long severed him from Tasso, but it is to his honor that, when the latter was unable to watch over his own works, he took care of and polished his lyrical poems. The most brilliant episode of Guarini's life was the

publication of his *Pastor Fido*, in 1590, but not the least troublesome was the literary controversy in which it involved him. These disputes, born of the jealousy of the Italian literati, are now forgotten, and to the *Pastor Fido* is conceded an honorable, though a second place. Its relation to its predecessor may be compared to that of the Corinthian order to the Ionic. Guarini has sought to compensate for the lack of natural, spontaneous inspiration by superior artifice of plot: his characters are more numerous, and his action more intricate and ingenious. This, of course, would not have availed him if he had not been a poet, but this he certainly was, and of the first rank, though he cannot be classed with his great contemporary. Tasso was conscious of a truer inspiration and conveys his claim to the virtual invention of a new method in poetry in the verses which he has placed in the mouth of Love appearing in the disguise of a shepherd, thus rendered by Leigh Hunt:

After new fashion shall these woods to-day
Hear love discoursed; and it shall well be seen
That my divinity is present here
In its own person, not its ministers.
I will inbreathe high fancies in rude hearts;
I will refine, and render dulcet sweet
Their tongues; because, wherever I may be,
Whether with rustic or heroic men,
There am I Love; and inequality,
As it may please me, I do equalize;
And 'tis my crowning glory and great miracle
To make the rustic pipe as eloquent
Even as the subtlest harp.

Guarini frequently repeated Tasso's ideas, striving to enhance their effect by careful elaboration. The poetry of one or both has passed into Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*, and originated the scene of the temptation of Justina, an ornament of English literature in the incomparable version of Shelley.

Review of the Renaissance Period.

Taking a backward glance at the drama of Italy during the sixteenth century, we find there a higher development than in any other European country. In comedy the first productions were, as we have seen, little more than pedantic copies of Plautus and Terence, represented at the expense of the courts, before learned audiences. But presently, though we do not know the precise period, troops of professional comedians possessed themselves of these dramas, and recited them before the public for hire. From that time the tastes of the public became a matter of greater importance to actors and authors. It was no longer sufficient that a piece was made conformable to the rules which the critics pretended to have deduced from the ancients; it was also requisite that it should interest or amuse. Machiavelli and Pietro Aretino had shown how laughter might be excited by the delineation of modern manners and vices. The example of Terence was gradually neglected, and a crowd of authors undertook, with less erudition, indeed, but with more vivacity, to entertain the public. The most remarkable among them was Anton Maria Grassini, of Florence, who endeavored

to give to his native drama manners and rules entirely national, and who overwhelmed with ridicule both the pedants and the disciples of Petrarch, the first for their lifeless imitation of the ancients, the second for their Platonic love, their devotion to their mistresses and the tender mysticism which rendered all their lyric poetry equally insipid. A great number of comic writers followed in the footsteps of Giovanni Battista Gelli, but among them was not a single comic genius. If the earlier authors were justly reproached with pedantry, those who followed were equally chargeable with ignorance and negligence. Content to draw laughter from the populace by their coarse and unpolished jests, they ignored the art of disposing and unravelling the plot and of giving a true delineation of character.

Nearly all these comedies, so numerous and so indifferently, owe their existence to the academies and were there represented. Italy was thronged in this age with literary societies, which took the title of academies, and which assumed at the same time absurd and fanciful names. Among other exercises, the composition and recitation of comedies, with a view of restoring the drama of the ancients, was one of the earliest occupations of these societies. To this object their efforts were principally directed, and as the performance of the play was at the same time amusing and profitable, even the small towns maintained their academies, chiefly for the purpose of giving theatrical performances to the public. Thus is explained the rapid multiplication of academies, so remarkable in the history of Italy, and of which the object was long un-

discovered. Even in the nineteenth century nearly all the theatres of Italy belonged to these societies, the title and academical privileges passing from father to son and sometimes being sold. While the academicians no longer perform in person, they hire out their theatres to strolling companies, giving pretentious literary titles to associations devoted to pleasure and profit.

The wandering companies who thus occupied the theatres of Italy also took their rise in the sixteenth century, but in an obscure manner, which has never been thoroughly explained. For their origin we must look to the mountebanks who began to represent, on temporary stages, farces of ever-increasing length, so that what was at first only an extempore dialogue between a couple of strolling players assumed, by degrees, the form of a comedy, gradually developing into the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The pieces were not written out, but a certain character was assigned to each actor, together with a provincial dialect. Hence, also, the invention of the masks of pantaloon, harlequin and columbine, who, for nearly four centuries, continued to furnish an inexhaustible fund of entertainment.

To speak more exactly, the *Commedia dell'Arte* was a development of the *Commedia e Sogetto*, or Improvised comedy, which, in turn, was a descendant of the ancient Roman *Atellanæ*. The invention of the *Commedia dell'Arte* is attributed to Francisco Cherea, the favorite player of Leo X. Its scenes, still unwritten except in skeleton, were connected together by links, corresponding to the Roman *sannio*. It was in this species of performance that the summit of harlequin's

glory was reached, when, in the seventeenth century, he was ennobled in the person of Cecchino by the emperor Matthias. Of his successors we read, however, that "they shut the door in Italy to good comedy." Entirely distinct from this growth was that of the so-called "masked comedy," the action in which was carried on by certain typical figures in masks, all speaking in local dialects, but which were not improvised, and from the nature of the play could not have been. The inventor was one Beoleo, of Padua, calling himself "joker," who published six comedies in various dialects, including the modern Greek of the day. According to a leading authority, the masked characters included Pantalone, a Venetian merchant; Dottore, a Bolognese physician; Spaviento, a Neapolitan braggadocio; Pulliccinella, an Apulian wag; Coviello, a Calabrian clown; Gelfomino, a Roman beau; Brighella, a Ferrarese pimp, and Arlecchino, a blundering servant of Bergamo. Besides these and other personages, of whom at least four appeared in each piece, there were the Amorosos or Innamoratas, lovers and their beloved—though women never appeared on the Italian stage until 1560—together with the Columbina, Spilletta and other waiting-maids, all unmasked and speaking either in the Roman or Tuscan language. Such, in brief, was the masked comedy, to which the Italians so tenaciously clung.

We have now reached the limit of the Italian Renaissance, which permeated the entire literature of the age, bequeathing, in a new form of art, its form and influence to succeeding generations throughout the civilized world.

VIII.

The Spanish, French and English Renaissance.

The mediæval, and in part the modern, literature of Spain differs from that of other European countries in that it is decidedly oriental, with a different spirit and a different sphere of ideas. Hence he who would judge it aright should first become perfectly familiar with it; for nothing can be more unjust than to estimate by our own notions of poetry, which the Spaniards neither recognize nor regard, works with which they have so little in common. The first thing to be noticed about Spanish literature, and especially dramatic literature, is its extreme fecundity; for there are more dramas in Spanish than in all the other languages of Europe combined, and hence the greater need of care in the selection of specimens.

The literature of Spain manifests itself in sudden and fitful lights. At one instant we admire it, and at the next it is lost in obscurity; but such glimpses always induce a desire to see more of it. The first great tragic writer of the French stage borrowed his grandeur from the Spaniards, and after the *Cid*, which he imitated from Guillen de Castro, many tragi-comedies and ro-

mantic dramas may be traced to a Spanish origin. Le Sage, one of the greatest writers of romance, has all the Spaniard's genius, and in *Gil Blas*, though the work of a Frenchman, is a perfect picture of Spanish life and manners. *Don Quixote*, translated into all European languages, became known to the world for the wit and animation of its satires, and Spanish dramas and novels without number have since been adapted for the French and English stage.

Origin of Spanish Drama.

The Spaniards refer the origin of their drama, in the fifteenth century, to three distinct and very dissimilar sources: the Mystery plays represented in churches, the satirico-pastoral drama entitled *Mingo Revulgo*, and the dramatic romance of *Calixtus and Melibœa*, afterward styled *La Celestina*. The Mysteries, in which the most gross buffooneries were intermingled with religious solemnities, had unquestionably a decided influence on the Spanish drama, and the *Autos Sacramentales*—acts in honor of the sacraments—of the most famous authors, are largely formed on the model of these religious farces. The *Mingo Revulgo*, which was written during the reign of John II, in order to ridicule that monarch and his court, is rather a political satire in dialogue than a drama. *La Celestina*, the first act of which was written by an anonymous author toward the middle of the fifteenth century, may be considered the first attempt of the Spaniards in the line of historic comedy, which soon became a favorite form of the drama. Fernand de

Rojas, who published the entire work about the year 1510, asserts that this first act, which presents a singular picture of life in Castile, was written toward the middle of the fifteenth century by Juan de Mersa, or Rodrigo Cota, while he himself added the twenty acts that follow. This assertion has not been disputed, and there seems no reason to doubt it.

La Celestina.

The stage is supposed to represent a garden, in which Calixtus, a young and handsome cavalier, enters in pursuit of a falcon, and where he finds Melibœa, daughter of a great lord of the country. The piece commences as follows.

Calixtus.—I recognize clearly in this, oh Melibœa, the greatness of God!

Melibœa.—In what, Calixtus?

Cal.—In what? That he has given nature the power of arraying thee in such perfect beauty, and in according me, so little worthy, so high a favor as to behold thee; in a place, too, so convenient for acquainting you with my secret grief. Doubtless such a favor is incomparably greater than all services, sacrifices, devotion offered to God, in order that he might permit me to come here. What man was ever so glorified in this life as I am to-day? I am quite sure the glorious saints, who take such delight in the divine vision, cannot possess more bliss than I do now in contemplating thee. But, alas! see what a difference? While they are being glorified, they are in no fear of falling from so high a state; but my joy is alloyed with the torment thy absence must soon cause me.

Mel.—Do you, then, estimate this meeting at so high a price?

Cal.—Truly, it is so great that if God were to offer me the most precious earthly blessings I should esteem them of far less worth.

Mel.—However, if you persevere, I will give you a yet greater reward.

Cal.—Oh! my lucky ears, which, vile as they are, have heard a word so sweet!

Mel.—Unlucky, rather, as they will soon hear; for the punishment will be as severe as thy insensate boldness, and the tone of thy speech well merit. How dare a fellow like you think that a woman like me would so trifle with her virtue? Begone, begone, wretch! It is not in patience to bear the idea of seeing a man so far inflated as to express to me the delirium of an illicit amour.

After this reprimand Melibœa withdraws and appears no more during the first act. Calixtus remains on the stage with Sempronio, his valet, to whom he communicates his despair, gets into a rage with him, chases him off and calls him back again. He then describes his beloved in the most extravagant terms, pouring out a torrent of theological and fabulous lore.

Sempronio endeavors to enliven the scene by his pleasantries. He accuses his master of being a heretic, and in truth his accusations seem well merited. Probably the author's object is to prepare in this way the catastrophe.

Sempronio.—For my part, I protest that what you have just said is downright heresy!

Cal.—Why?

Semp.—Because it is against the Christian religion.

Cal.—And what care I?

Semp.—Are you not a Christian, then?

Cal.—I? I am a Melibœan; it is Melibœa whom I adore. I believe in Melibœa, and I love Melibœa.

After an intolerably tedious scene, and sallies of wit at least as indecent as profane, Sempronio at last tries to console his master by representing that his adored is still but a woman, that all women are frail, that all have capitulated, and that Melibœa will yield in her turn. He even pledges himself to bring the matter about.

Cal.—And how do you think of contriving this notable exploit?

Semp.—I am going to tell you. For some time past I have known an old hag with a beard, called Celestina, who lives near here. She is crafty and subtle, is an adept in sorcery and all kinds of wickedness. I am assured that in this town only there are five thousand young women whose reputations she has either destroyed or restored; nay, if she liked, she could make the very rocks themselves go mad with love!

Calixtus orders Sempronio to go in search of her. Sempronio visits Celestina, and meets his own mistress, Elsie, who had deceived him, in the company of another man. Though his jealousy is momentarily excited, Celestina contrives to soothe him, and, to prevent his declaring himself by his looks, persuades him to set out with her immediately to join Calixtus. The latter is attended by Parmenio, another of his valets. They see the hag approaching, and Parmenio gives free vent to the horror and contempt her sight inspires. Calixtus asks him the reason.

Parmenio.—That fine lady possesses, at a far end of the

town, close to a stream, a solitary house, half in ruins, of ugly aspect and vilely furnished. She there follows six different trades—those of a laundress, perfumeress, dealer in love-philters and charms, a botcher of lost reputations, a go-between and, finally, a witch. The first trade is a blind for all the others; under that pretence you see going to her house numbers of young femmes-de-chambres with linen. She has means of communicating with the most scrupulous women to gain her ends; she chooses the most favorable hours—at early mass, at night processions, at confessionals, and all other devotional appointments. I have frequently seen women in veils go into her house, followed by barefooted fellows, penitents, men in hoods, who doubtless went thither to bewall their sins.

Celestina is meanwhile introduced to Calixtus, who hastens to bring her the golden bribe. She remains with Parmenio, tries to corrupt him, and the dialogue is conducted with much spirit, displaying the skill of Celestina, and her insinuating character. She talks of her attachment to his mother, who, she declares, has entrusted her with money for him which she has kept quite safe. She makes him laugh with her licentious ribaldry; advises him to attach himself to Sempronio rather than his master, because the great have never any affection for the poor. Lastly, she promises her good offices with Arethusa, a cousin of Elsie's, whose love he shall possess. After these bye scenes Calixtus returns, gives her the money, and the act closes. The ancient author stopped there, his production being already the length of an ordinary comedy, though hardly begun.

The new writer added twenty acts, so long that a whole day would not suffice for their representation.

We can perceive little difference in the style, in the spirit of dialogue, and painting of the characters, any more than in the degree of license or wit, or the tableaux presented to the view of the spectators. Events are precipitated; on one side we see the amours of the two valets for Elsie and Arethusa; on the other, Celestina's insinuating art with Melibœa, first extorting an innocent favor, next an interview. She ends by receiving Calixtus into her apartment by night; but then the valets wish to constrain Celestina to divide the bribe she has received from their master with them. She refuses; they beat her, they kill her; justice pursues them, and the next morning they are beheaded, after having confessed their guilt and its motives, in the public place. Elsie and Arethusa vow to avenge the deaths of Celestina and the two valets on the head of Calixtus. They apply to some bandits smitten with their charms, and bring them to the house of Melibœa. Calixtus is assassinated as he is leaving it; and the lady, on learning the tidings, after confessing her fault to her parents, throws herself from the top of a tower.

Few works have had a success so brilliant as this drama. The author boasted that it was composed with a perfectly moral view, to warn the young against the snares of love, and especially of female panders. Nothing is said as to its representation; but it was read by every class of people; relished, perhaps, more for the evil examples it exhibited to view, than for the lessons it supplied with which to resist them. Widely diffused as the *chef d'œuvre* of Spanish works; printed in Spanish in other countries to promote the study of that

tongue; transferred to the Italian and the French; commented on by the clergy, though last of all condemned on the score of Celestina's immoralities; it is a work in which the Spanish literati still take pride for its nationality, and for opening, as they assert, the way to the dramatic career of other nations.

Romantic Drama.

While Italy produced many brilliant growths, from which the dramatic literatures of other nations largely borrowed, Spain is the only country of modern Europe which shares with England the honor of having achieved, at a relatively early date, the creation of a national form of the regular drama. So proper to Spain was the form which she produced and perfected, that to it the term romantic has been specifically applied, though such a restriction is not entirely justifiable. The influences which, from the Romance nations, with their Roman learning, culture and laws, spread to the Germanic races, were represented with the most signal force and fullness in the institutions of chivalry—to which, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "it was peculiar to blend military valor with the strongest passions which actuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and of love." These feelings, in their combined operation upon the national character, and in their reflection in the national literature, were not peculiar to Spain; but nowhere did they continue so long or so late to animate the moral life of a nation. Outward causes contributed to this result. For centuries

"The troubadours sublimated the minstrel's song sometimes into the almost Homeric poem, heightened the force and beauty of the Arthurian legends, discussed points of gallantry in dialogues termed jeux partis, and relieved a profusion of serious romances with fables relating to merry incidents of every-day life."



after the crusades had become a mere memory, Spain was a battle ground between the cross and the crescent. And it was precisely at the time when the Renaissance was establishing new starting-points for the literary progress of Europe, that she rose to the height of her glory through the expulsion of the Moors and the conquest of the New World.

From their rulers or rivals of many ages the Spaniards had derived that rich glow of color which became permanently distinctive of their national life, and more especially of their literary and artistic productions; they had also, perhaps, derived from the same source an equally characteristic refinement in their treatment of the passion of love. The ideas of Spanish chivalry—more especially religious devotion and a punctilious sense of personal honor—asserted themselves with peculiar distinctness in literature and art after the great achievements to which they had contributed in other fields had already been wrought. The ripest glories of the Spanish drama belong to an age of national decay, though always mindful of a greater past. Yet the chivalrous enthusiasm pervading so many of the masterpieces of its literature is a characteristic of the Spanish nation in all ages, even in the least hopeful periods of its later history; and the religious ardor breathed by these works, though associating itself with what is called the Catholic reaction, is in truth only a manifestation of the spirit which produced the Reformation movement itself. The Spanish drama neither sought nor could seek to emancipate itself from views and forms of religious life more than ever sacred to the Spanish people

since the glorious days of Ferdinand and Isabella; and it is not in the beginnings, but in the later eras of Spanish dramatic literature that there is often difficulty in deciding what is to be termed a religious and what a secular play. After Spain had thus fully unfolded that incomparably richest expression of national life and sentiment in artistic forms—a truly national drama—the terrible decay of her greatness and prosperity gradually impaired the strength of a brilliant but dependent growth. In the absence of strong original genius, the Spaniards began to turn to foreign models, though little supported in such attempts by popular sympathy; and it is only in more recent times that they have sought to reproduce the ancient forms from whose masterpieces the nation had never become estranged, while accommodating them to tastes and tendencies shared by later Spanish literature with that of Europe at large.

The earlier dramatic efforts of Spanish literature, apart from those already mentioned, require but the briefest of notice. The father of the Spanish drama was J. de la Enzina, whose *Representaciones*, under the name of eclogues, were dramatic dialogues of a religious or pastoral character. His attempts were imitated more especially by Gil Vicente, a Portuguese who wrote both in Spanish and in his native tongue; the dramatic literature of Portugal having produced nothing of equal merit before or since. A further impulse came, as was natural, from Spaniards resident in Italy, and especially from Naharro, who in 1517 published, as the chief among the “firstlings of his genius,” a series of eight comedias—a term commonly applied in Spanish litera-

ture to any kind of drama. He claimed some knowledge of the theory of the ancient drama, divided his plays into jornadas, to correspond to acts, and opened them with a prologue. Very various in their subjects, and occasionally odd in form, they were gross as well as audacious in tone, and were soon prohibited by the Inquisition. The church was unwilling to surrender her control over such dramatic exhibitions as she permitted, and sought to suppress the few plays not strictly on religious subjects which appeared in the early part of the reign of Charles I. The few translations published from the classical drama exercised no effect.

Lopé de Rueda.

Thus the foundation of the Spanish national theatre was reserved for a man of the people. Cervantes has vividly sketched the humble resources which were at the command of Lopé de Rueda in 1544-1567. A mechanic of Seville, with his friend, the bookseller Timoneda, and two brother authors and actors in his strolling company, he succeeded in transferring dramatic entertainments from churches and palaces into the public places of the towns, where they were produced on temporary scaffolds. The manager carried about his properties in a corn sack; and the "comedies" were still only "dialogues, and a species of eclogues between two or three shepherds and a shepherdess," enlivened at times by intermezzos of favorite comic figures. One of Rueda's plays, at least, and one of Timoneda's, seem to have been taken from an Italian

source; others mingled modern themes with classical apparitions; still others of a slighter description were called *pasos*—a species afterward termed *entremeses* and resembling the modern French *proverbes*. With these popular efforts of Lopé de Rueda and his friends a considerable dramatic activity began in the years 1560-1590 in several Spanish cities, and before the close of this period permanent theatres began to be fitted up at Madrid. Yet, for a time, the Spaniards seemed inclined to follow the Italians in turning to an imitation of classical models, and in this direction pointed the two plays by Bermudez on the national subject of Inez de Castro; the *Dido* of C. de Virnes, and the tragedies of L. L. de Argensola.

Cervantes.

Such was the condition of the Spanish drama, when, at last, about the same time as that of the English, its future was determined by writers of original genius. The first of these was the immortal Cervantes, who, however, failed to anticipate by his earlier plays the great success of his famous romance. In his endeavor to give a poetic character to the drama he fell upon the expedient of introducing personified abstractions speaking a "divine" or elevated language—a device which was for a time favorably received. But these plays exhibit a neglect or ignorance of the laws of dramatic construction; their action is episodic: and it is from the realism of these episodes, especially in the *Numancia*, which is crowded with both figures and incidents, and from the power and flow of the declama-

tion, that their effect must have been derived. When, in later years, Cervantes returned to dramatic composition, the style and form of the national drama had been definitively settled by a large number of writers, the brilliant success of whose acknowledged chief may previously have diverted Cervantes from his labors for the theatre. His influence upon the general progress of dramatic literature is, however, to be sought, not only in his plays, but also in those *novelas exemplares* to which some of the best Spanish dramas are indebted for their plot, and for much of their dialogue.

The author of *Don Quixote* stands foremost in that band of classic authors who cast such glory on the reigns of the three Philips, during the latter part of the sixteenth and the commencement of the seventeenth century.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in poverty and obscurity, in 1549, at Alcala de Henares. He assumed the title of hidalgo, or gentleman, but nothing is known of his family or early education, except that he was sent to a school in Madrid, where he acquired some knowledge of the classics. During this period he read with extreme avidity all the poets and romance-writers of Spain, and set the highest value, even at this early period of his life, on elegance of diction and on preserving the purity of the Castilian language. He wrote in his youth a number of poems and romances, as well as a pastoral romance, entitled *Filena*, which has been lost. Compelled to travel in search of a livelihood, which he was unable to find at home, he attached himself to the person of Cardinal Aquaviva, with whom he

visited Rome, but soon abandoning the servile office which he had accepted from the prelate, he entered the army, and served under Marc-Antonio Colonna. He was also present under the banners of Don John of Austria at the battle of Lepanto, where he lost his left hand by a wound from an arquebuss. Being obliged to renounce the profession of arms, probably without having risen above the rank of a common soldier, he embarked for Spain; but the vessel in which he was sailing being captured by a Barbary corsair, he was carried to Algiers, and there remained five years and a half in slavery, until ransomed in 1581.

Thus did Cervantes return to his native country, maimed, penniless and friendless, without prospects and without resources; but such was the strength of his mind, the liveliness of his temper and the vigor of his imagination, that he not only gained the means of livelihood, but acquired a high reputation by his dramatic genius, which he exercised in the composition of comedies and tragedies, all of them received with marked approbation by the public. He was thirty-five years of age when he published his *Galatea*, and soon afterward he gave to the theatre about thirty comedies, which have not been preserved. The rivalry of Lopé de Vega, who, about the same period, met with prodigious success, induced him for some time to lay aside his pen. He had married, and he was then, probably, living on the means which his wife had brought him, though before his marriage it appears that he obtained at Seville some little office, which preserved him from absolute want. In 1605, Cervantes, who had not

appeared before the public for one-and-twenty years, gave to the world the first part of his *Don Quixote*. The success of this work was remarkable; thirty thousand copies are said to have been struck off in the author's lifetime; it was translated into all languages, and was loudly praised by all classes of readers. Philip III seeing, from his balcony, a student walking along the banks of the Manganares, and as he read bursting into involuntary fits of laughter, said to his courtiers that the man was either mad or reading *Don Quixote*. Neither Philip III, however, nor any of his courtiers, thought fit to offer assistance to an indigent author, who was the glory of Spain, and who had written a work so full of comic talent within the walls of a prison, where he was confined for debt.

The conclusion of the sixteenth century and the commencement of the seventeenth century was a very learned epoch. The best Spanish scholars of this period, becoming disciples of the classical authors, upheld with much fervor the poetical system of Aristotle and the rules of the three unities. Dramatic writers, while they recognized the authority of these rules, neglected to act upon them, for they were compelled to follow the tastes of the public. Yet they confessed in a curious manner the superiority of the laws which they ignored. Lopé de Vega, in some verses addressed to the Academy of Poetry at Madrid, exculpates himself from this charge in the following manner:

I write a play! Then, ere I pen a line,
Under six locks and keys let me confine
All rules of art—Next, Plautus! 'tis thy doom,

And, Terence, thine, to quit forthwith the room,
Lest ye upbraid me.—Books can speak, though dumb,
And tell unwelcome truths. By other laws
I write, laid down by those who seek applause
From vulgar mouths; what then? the vulgar pay;
They love a fool—and let them have their way.

Cervantes, in the first part of his *Don Quixote*, introduces a canon of Toledo, who, after blaming the Spaniards with some asperity for having perpetually violated the laws of the dramatic art, regrets that the government has not established a censor for the drama, who might have power to prevent the representation of pieces, not only when they are injurious to morals, but likewise when they offend against the laws of classical poetry.

Dramas of Cervantes.

If the magistrate thus proposed by Cervantes had been instituted, and had he been, by any possibility, inaccessible to intrigue, to favor and to prejudice, he would probably have forbidden the representation of the dramas of Cervantes, since they are by no means constructed upon those classical rules, the neglect of which the poet so deeply regrets. The tragedy of *Numantia* and the comedy of *Life in Algiers* are the only two which have been preserved out of twenty or thirty dramas, written soon after the author's release from captivity. Those which he published in 1615 were never represented, and it is from the preface to the latter that the above sketch of dramatic art has been quoted. When Cervantes speaks of this work of his

old age, his simplicity and gayety have in them something touching, for it is evident that he was suffering an inward mortification, more severe in proportion as his poverty rendered success desirable.

"Some years since," says he, "I returned to the ancient occupation of my leisure hours; and imagining that the age had not passed away in which I used to hear the sound of praise, I again began to write comedies. The birds, however, had flown from their nest. I could find no manager to ask for my plays, though they knew that I had written them. I threw them, therefore, into the corner of a trunk, and condemned them to eternal obscurity. A bookseller then informed me that he would have bought them, had he not been told by a celebrated author that much dependence might be placed upon my prose but none upon my poetry. To say the truth, this information mortified me much. I said to myself: 'Certainly, I am either changed or the world, contrary to its custom, has become much wiser, for in past time I used to meet with praise.' I read my comedies anew, together with some interludes which I had placed with them. I found that they were not so bad but they might pass from what this author called darkness into what others may, perhaps, term noon-day. I was angry, and sold them to the bookseller who has now printed them. They have paid me tolerably, and I have pocketed my money with pleasure and without troubling myself about the opinions of the actors. I was willing to make them as excellent as I could; and if, dear reader, thou findest anything good in them, I pray thee, when thou

meetest any other calumniator, to tell him to amend his manners, and not to judge so severely, since, after all, the plays contain not any incongruities or striking faults."

The dramas of Cervantes require, indeed, all the indulgence which the author himself entreated from his readers. In order to be just toward him we must commence by rejecting all our theatrical prepossessions, remembering that he wrote before any of those authors whom we regard as the legislators of the drama, that he wrote upon a different system and with another object in view. Let us, then, consider his dramas as a series of pictures, all connected by the chain of historical interest, though varying in subject. In some he has endeavored to excite the noblest sentiments of the heart: in his *Numantia*, patriotism; in his *Life in Algiers*, compassion for the unfortunate. Such are the only unities for which we must seek in his dramas. Let us abandon ourselves to his eloquence, without endeavoring to resist the feelings of terror or pity which he seeks to awake; and let us forget, if it be in our power, those rules which our own dramatists obey, but which to him are entirely inapplicable. When we analyze even the models of antiquity, we do not apply to all of them rules equally severe. We do not forget that Æschylus, like Cervantes, was in the van of his art. Perhaps, if we compared the *Numantia* with the *Agamemnon* or with the *Prometheus*, many points of resemblance between these two celebrated authors would strike us. We should probably find that, in the grandeur of the incidents, in the depth of feeling, in the nature and

language of the allegorical personages introduced upon the stage, and, lastly, in the patriotic sentiments of the compositions, the oldest of the Spanish dramatists has approached nearer to the most ancient of the Greek tragedians than any intentional imitation could have accomplished.

The Numantia.

A strong feeling of patriotism is manifested by Cervantes in his *Numantia*. He has taken as the subject of his tragedy the destruction of a Spanish city which valiantly opposed the Romans, and whose inhabitants, rather than surrender themselves to the enemy, preferred perishing beneath the ruins of their homes, slaughtering one another, and precipitating themselves into flames. The subject is not one which would be considered, at the present day, as suitable to the purposes of the drama. It is too extensive, too public, too little adapted to the display of individual passions, and of those motives which operate upon persons and not upon nations. A certain degree of admiration, however, cannot be refused to this awesome drama, so full of woe that it seems like an expiatory sacrifice offered up to the manes of a great city.

A striking scene represents the interior of Numantia. The council of war is assembled, and Theogenes, having given an account of the failure of the sacrifices, of the enchantments, and of the challenge, proposes again to make a sally. The warriors dread the opposition of their wives, whom they will be compelled to abandon. The women, informed of the proposed sortie, crowd

around the council-chamber with their infants in their arms, and each, in eloquent language, demands to share the fortunes of her husband:

What is it that you wish, brave warriors?
Have, then, your sorrowful fancies work'd on you
To fly us and forsake us? Do ye think
To leave the virgins of Numantia
A spoil to arrogant Romans, and your sons,
Your free-born sons, in bondage to the foe?
Were it not better that your own right hand
At once should take the life which ye have given?
If you are well resolved to attempt the sortie,
Then take us with you. It will be life to us
To perish by your sides. Nor will ye thus
Shorten our way to death, for famine ever
Threatens to cut the thread of life in twain.

After several of the women have spoken, Theogenes answers their complaints with great tenderness. He swears that they shall not be abandoned by their husbands, but that living or dying they shall still be protected. Lastly, he persuades the Numantians to a still more desperate course, one that will not leave within the walls of Numantia a single relic of their persons or property to adorn the triumph of the enemy. He proposes that in the middle of the great square a pile should be raised, upon which the citizens should themselves cast all their riches, and that to mitigate for a few hours, at least, the hunger which consumes them, the Roman prisoners should be slain, and eaten by the soldiery. The people immediately adopt this frightful resolution.

After the terrible suicidal sacrifice has been made, the Romans perceive the stillness which reigns in Nu-

mantia, Caius Marius mounts upon the wall by a ladder, and is shocked to see the city one lake of blood, and the streets all filled with the dead. Scipio fears that this universal massacre will deprive him of all the honor of a triumph. If a single Numantian captive could be found alive to be chained to his ear, that honor would be his; but Caius Marius and Jugurtha, who have traversed all the streets, have met with nothing but gore and corpses. At last, however, they discover Viriatus at the top of a tower. Scipio addresses him, and invites him, with kind words and promises, to deliver himself up. Viriatus rejects his offers with indignation. He is unwilling to survive his country; and after heaping curses upon the Romans, he precipitates himself from the tower, and falls lifeless at the feet of Scipio. Renown, with a trumpet in her hand, terminates the tragedy by promising eternal glory to the Numantians.

The *Numantia* was acted several times in the earlier part of the life of Cervantes, while the nation was still warm with the enthusiasm which the victories of Charles V had produced, and while the reverses which they began to experience under Philip II made them doubly resolute not to stain their ancient glories. We may conceive how deeply the Spaniards must have felt the sentiments of national glory and independence which breathe throughout the drama, and with what animation they must have prepared for new dangers and new sacrifices. We thus see that the theatre, which has been denominated barbarous, did in fact approach much nearer than our own to that of the Greeks, in the influence which it exerted over the people, and in

the power which the poet wielded over his audience. We cannot, however, avoid a feeling of repulsion at the ferocity which pervades the whole drama. The resolution of the Numantians, the details of their situation, the progress of the plot, and the catastrophe, are all terrific. The tragedy does not draw tears, but the shuddering horror which it induces becomes almost a punishment to the spectator.

Life in Algiers.

Life in Algiers has been called a comedy; but neither that title, nor the name of Cervantes, must lead us to expect in this piece the humor which reigns throughout *Don Quixote*. To the gloomy picture which is represented in this drama no relief is afforded either by liveliness of plot or by amusing delineation of character. Cervantes did, indeed, in his interludes, condescend to excite laughter; but the object both of his comedies and of his tragedies was to awaken terror and pity. All his compositions were adapted to excite popular feeling on the topics of politics or religion; to strengthen the pride, the independence or the fanaticism of the Spaniards. His dramas were divided into tragedies and comedies according to the rank of the characters and the dignity of the action, and not from any reference to the liveliness or the gravity of their subjects.

Cervantes, as already stated, had been detained for several years as a captive at Algiers, and his own sufferings and those of his companions had made a deep impression upon him. He returned to Spain with feelings

of violent hatred against the Moors, and with an ardent desire to contribute toward the redemption of those who had fallen into the hands of the Mussulmen. His comedy of *Life in Algiers*; another drama which he published toward the close of his life, and the tale of the captive in *Don Quixote* were not mere literary works, but charitable endeavors to serve those who had been his brothers in distress, and to excite public opinion in their favor. His object was to rouse the nation and the king himself against the Mussulmen, and to preach a crusade for the deliverance of all Christian captives.

To accomplish this end he proposed merely to give to the public a sketch of the life of the captives in Algiers, and a description of the interior of their habitations. He, therefore, employed no dramatic action, no plot and no catastrophe; nor did he pay the least regard to the laws of the unities. He only collected into one point of view the various sufferings, pains and humiliations which were consequent upon slavery amongst the Moors. The truth of the picture, the proximity of the scene, and the immediate interest of the spectators, supplied the want of art, which is visible in this drama, and exerted, it may easily be believed, a powerful influence over the audience.

Life in Algiers contains various adventures, unconnected with one another except in community of suffering. The principal characters are Aurelio and Sylvia, an affectionate pair who are exposed to the solicitations of their mistress and master. The religion and conjugal fidelity of Aurelio having induced him to repress all the

advances of his mistress, Zara, he is at last tempted with enchantments; but the demons soon perceive that they have no power over a Christian. He is then exposed to the seductive influence of Occasion and Necessity, who are personified by the dramatist, and who make various suggestions to the captive, which he at last succeeds in expelling from his mind. At the conclusion of the piece both Aurelio and Sylvia are sent home by the Dey on the promise of a large ransom.

Another captive of the name of Sebastian relates, with extreme indignation, a spectacle of which he had been a witness; the reprisals exercised upon the Christians by the Mussulmen. The conduct of the Moors, however, at which the captive expresses such horror, appears only to have been a just retaliation. A Moor who had been forced to submit to the ceremony of baptism at Valencia, being afterward exiled with his countrymen, had taken up arms against the Christians. Being made prisoner in an engagement, he was recognized as having been baptized, and was delivered over to the Inquisition, who condemned him to be burnt as a relapsed infidel. His relations and friends, eager to avenge him, bought a Valencian captive of the same class of Inquisitors from among whom his judges had been appointed, and inflicted upon him a similar death. If the rigor of such reprisals could have suspended the frightful proceedings of the Inquisition, this attempt to terrify the Spaniards with the consequences of their own barbarity would have been grounded upon good reason. The retaliation in this case did not inflict the punishment of the guilty upon the innocent, for every In-

quisitor was bound to participate in the same crime. The anecdote is founded on fact, and the Inquisitor burnt by the Algerines was the monk Miguel de Aranda.

One of the most affecting scenes in the drama is the slave market. The public crier offers for sale a father and mother and their two children, who are to be sold in separate lots. The resignation of the father, who in this dreadful calamity does not forget to confide in the goodness of God, the tears of the mother, and the childish conviction of the younger captives, that no power upon earth can dispose of them contrary to the will of their parents, form a terrible picture. The merchant who is about to buy one of the children makes him open his mouth, in order that he may see whether he is in good health. The unhappy child, unconscious that it is possible for him to suffer greater griefs than those which he has already experienced, imagines that the merchant is going to extract a decayed tooth, and assuring him that it does not ache, begs him not to pull it out. These little incidents more forcibly describe the horrors of slavery than the most labored eloquence could do. In the child is exhibited a touching ignorance of the destiny which awaits him; in the merchant a cold and calculating interest contrasted with a sensibility which he beholds without any emotion. The merchant, who is in other respects a worthy man, after giving 130 piasters for the youngest of the children, thus addresses him :

Merchant.—Come hither, child, 'tis time to go to rest.

Juan.—Seignor, I will not leave my mother here,
To go with any one.

Mother.—Alas! my child, thou art no longer mine,
But his who bought thee.

Juan.—What! then, have you, mother,
Forsaken me?

Mother.—O Heavens! how cruel are ye!

Merchant.—Come, hasten, boy.

Juan.—Will you go with me, brother?

Francisco.—I cannot, Juan, 'tis not in my power,—
May Heaven protect you, Juan!

Mother.—Oh, my child,
My joy and my delight, God won't forget thee!

Juan.—O father! mother! whither will they bear me
Away from you?

Mother.—Permit me, worthy Seignor,
To speak a moment in my infant's ear.
Grant me this small contentment; very soon
I shall know naught but grief.

Merchant.—What you would say,
Say now; to-night is the last timē.

Mother.—To-night
Is the first time my heart e'er felt such grief.

Juan.—Pray keep me with you, mother, for I know not
Whither he'd carry me.

Mother.—Alas, poor child!
Fortune forsook thee even at thy birth;
The heavens are overcast, the elements
Are turbid, and the very sea and winds
Are all combin'd against me. Thou, my child,
Know'st not the dark misfortunes into which
Thou art so early plung'd, but happily
Lackest the power to comprehend thy fate.
What I would crave of thee, my life, since I
Must never more be bless'd with seeing thee,
Is that thou never, never wilt forget
To say, as thou wert wont, thy Ave Mary;

For that bright queen of goodness, grace and virtue,
Can loosen all thy bonds and give thee freedom.

Juan.—O mother, mother, may I not remain?

And must these Moors then carry me away?

Mother.—With thee, my child, they rob me of my treasures.

Juan.—Oh, I am much afraid!

Mother.—'Tis I, my child,

Who ought to fear at seeing thee depart.

Thou wilt forget thy God, me, and thyself;

What else can I expect from thee, abandon'd

At such a tender age, amongst a people

Full of deceit and all iniquity?

In the fifth act Juan is introduced as a renegade. He has been seduced by the dainties and rich clothing which his master has given him. He is proud of his turban, and disdains the other captives, saying that it is a sin in a Mussulman to remain in conversation with Christians. Cervantes has inserted a scene between Juan and his mother, who is in despair at his apostasy. The mother, however, does not again appear; her grief must have been too poignant for representation.

The escape of Pedro Alvarez, one of the captives, who, being unable any longer to bear the horrors of slavery, resolves to cross the desert, and endeavor to reach Oran by following the line of the coast, forms another independent plot. He prepares ten pounds of biscuit, made of eggs, flour and honey, and with this stock of provisions and three pairs of shoes he enters upon a journey of sixty leagues, through an unknown country, and over a burning desert infested with wild beasts.

In one scene the captive is introduced consulting with Saavedra, under which name, probably, the dramatist intended to represent himself. In another, we find him in the midst of the desert, where he is wandering after having lost his way; his provisions are exhausted, his clothes are in tatters, his shoes are worn out and he is tormented with hunger, and reduced to such an extreme of weakness that he can with difficulty walk. In this state of distress he invokes the Virgin of Montserrat, and presently a lion appearing crouches down at his feet. The captive finds his strength restored; the lion becomes his guide; he recommences his journey, and when he appears upon the stage the third time, he has nearly arrived at Oran.

Toward the conclusion of the fifth act the arrival of a monk of the order of the Trinity is announced, bearing with him a sum of money for the redemption of the captives. The prisoners throw themselves on their knees in prayer, and the curtain falls, leaving the spectators to conclude that they are all redeemed.

Characteristics of Cervantes' Dramas.

Such are the two dramas which alone remain of the twenty or thirty which were composed by Cervantes in his youth. They are curious specimens of the character which that great genius gave to the national drama of Spain, at a period when it was in his power to model it according to his will. The theatre of the ancients was not unknown to Cervantes, for, in addition to the opportunities he had enjoyed of becoming acquainted with

it in the learned languages, he was very familiar with the Italian, and consequently with the efforts which had been made at the court of Leo X to revive the scenic representations of Greece and Rome. Cervantes, however, thought that the moderns ought to possess a drama which should represent their own manners, opinions and character, and not those of antiquity. He formed, indeed, his idea of tragedy upon the models of the ancients; but that which he beheld was not what we discover in their dramas. The dramatic art appeared to him to be the art of transporting the audience into the midst of events calculated, from their political or religious interest, to make the most profound impression upon the mind; tragedy, the art of making the spectators sharers in the most brilliant historical incidents, and comedy, of introducing them into the houses of individuals, and of laying bare their vices or their virtues. He attached little importance to that which has become a matter of such consequence in our eyes, the space of time which is supposed to elapse between each scene, and the power of transferring the actors from place to place. He paid the greatest attention, on the contrary, to that which we have considered as a defect in the ancient drama, the poetical and religious or lyrical portion, which among the Greeks was the province of the chorus, and which Cervantes wished to reproduce by the aid of allegorical personages.

The two dramas of Cervantes occupy an insulated station in the literature of Spain. We discover not after him any instance of that terrible majesty which

reigns throughout the *Numantia*, of its simplicity of action, its natural dialogue and its truth of sentiment. Lopé de Vega introduced new plays upon the stage, and the public, captivated by the pleasure of pursuing an intrigue through its thousand windings, became disgusted with the representation of powerful and deep emotions, which produced not the effect of surprise. Cervantes himself gave way to the national taste, without satisfying it, in the plays which he published in his declining years, and the Castilian Æschylus may be said to have left us only one real specimen of his dramatic genius.

The Early French Drama.

In France the regular drama sprang directly from the literary movement of the Renaissance. Du Bellay sounded the note of attack which converted that movement in France into an endeavor to transform the national literature; and in Ronsard the classical school of poetry put forward its conquering hero and sovereign law-giver. Among the disciples who gathered round Ronsard, and who with him formed, about the middle of the sixteenth century, the "Pleiad" of French literature, Stephen Jodelle, the reformer of the French theatre, held a distinguished place. The stage of this period left ample room for the enterprise of this youthful writer. The popularity of the old entertainments had reached its height when Louis XII, in his conflict with Pope Julius II, had not scrupled to call in the aid of Pierre Gregoire (Gringore), and when the *Mère Sotte* had

mockingly masqueraded in the petticoats of Holy Church. Under Francis I the Inquisition had to some extent succeeded in repressing the audacity of the actors, whose follies were at the same time an utter abomination in the eyes of the Huguenots. For a time the very Mysteries had been prohibited. Meanwhile, isolated translations of Italian or classical dramas had, in literature, begun the movement which Jodelle now transferred to the stage itself. His tragedy, *Cleopatre Captive*, was produced in 1552, on the same day as his comedy, *L'Eugène*; his *Didon se Sacrifiant* followed in 1558. Thus, at a time when a national theatre was perhaps impossible in a country distracted by civil and religious conflicts, whose monarchy had not yet welded together a number of provinces attached each to its own traditions, and whose population, especially in the capital, was enervated by frivolity or enslaved by fanaticism, was born that long-lived artificial growth, the so-called classical tragedy of France. Comedy, on the other hand, though subjected to the same influences as tragedy, had a national basis upon which to proceed, and its history is partly that of a modification of old popular forms.

The history of French tragedy begins with the *Cleopatre Captive*, in the representation of which the author, together with other members of the "Pleiad," took part. It is a tragedy in the manner of Seneca, devoid of action and provided with a ghost and a chorus. Though mainly written in the five-foot iambic couplet, it contains passages in the Alexandrine metre, which, soon afterward, La Peruse used in his *Médée*, and

Jodelle in his *Didon*. Numerous tragedies followed in the same style by various authors, among whom Bounyn produced the first regular tragedy on a subject neither Greek nor Roman, and the brothers De la Taille and J. Grevin distinguished themselves by their style. Though in the reign of Charles IX a vain attempt was made by Filleul to introduce the pastoral style of the Italians into French tragedy, while the Brotherhood of the Passion was intermingling with pastoral plays the expiring efforts of the religious drama, the classical school, in spite of all difficulties, prevailed. Monchrestien exhibited unusual vigor of rhetoric, and in R. Garnier French tragedy reached the greatest height in nobility and dignity of style, as well as in the exhibition of dramatic power, to which it attained before Corneille. In his tragedies choruses are still interspersed among the lengthy Alexandrine tirades of the dialogue.

During this period, comedy had likewise been influenced by classical models; but the distance was less between the national farces and Terence than between the Mysteries or Moralities and Seneca or the Greeks. *L'Eugène* differs little in style from the more elaborate of the old farces; and while it satirizes the foibles of the clergy without any appreciable abatement of the old license, its theme is the favorite burden of the French comic theatre of all times—*le cocuage*. The examples, however, which directly facilitated the productiveness of the French comic dramatists of this period, among whom Jean de la Taille was the first to attempt a regular comedy in prose, were those of the Italian stage, which in 1576 established a permanent

colony in France. This survived until the close of the seventeenth century, by which time it had adopted the French language and was ready to coalesce with French actors, without, however, relinquishing all remembrance of its origin. R. Belleau, a member of the "Pleiad," produced a comedy in which appears the type, already approached by Jodelle, of the swaggering captain; Grevin copied Italian intrigue, characters and manners; O. de Turnebe borrowed the title of one Italian play and perhaps parts of the plots of others; the Florentine F. d'Amboise produced versions of two Italian comedies; and the foremost French comic poet of the century, P. de Larivey, likewise an Italian born, openly professed to imitate the poets of his native country. His plays are more or less literal translations of Dolce, Secchi and other Italian dramatists, and this lively and witty author, to whom Molière owes much, thus connects two of the most important and successful growths of the modern comic drama.

The troubles of the great civil and religious wars of the sixteenth century had in certain spheres of society produced a reaction toward culture and refinement; and the seal had been set upon the results of the Renaissance by Malherbe, the father of the French style. The people sought to solace or distract its weariness and its sufferings with the help of the ministers of that half-cynical gayety which has always lighted up the darkest hours of French popular life. In the troublous days preceding Richelieu's accession to power the *Tabarinades*—a kind of street dialogue recalling the earliest days of the popular drama—had made the Pont-Neuf

the favorite theatre of the Parisian populace. Meanwhile, the influence of Spain, which Henry IV had overcome in politics, had, throughout his reign and afterward, been predominant in other spheres, and not the least in literature. Much of the French drama of this age is of the same kind as its romance literature, and like it, fell under the castigation of Boileau's satire. Heroic love, "fertile in tender sentiments," took possession of the theatre as well as of the romance; and Calprenède, G. de Scudéry, and others were equally fashionable in either. Meanwhile, Spanish and Italian models continued to influence both branches of the drama. Everybody knew by heart Gongora's version of the story of "young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," as dramatized by Viaud, and the sentiment of Tristan became a power on the stage, and drew tears from Cardinal Richelieu in the audience. Even Duryer's style, otherwise superior to that of his contemporaries, is stated to have been Italian in its defects. A mixture of the forms of classical comedy with elements of the Spanish and Italian pastoral was attempted with great success by Hardi, a playwright who thanked heaven that he knew the precepts of his art while preferring to follow the demands of his trade. The same admixture was adopted by Racan, Rotrou and others; and among comedies of intrigue in the Spanish fashion are included the earliest efforts of Corneille. The year 1636 is famous for an event which marks an epoch in the history of the French drama, and that is the appearance of Corneille's *Cid*; for now a new star had risen above the horizon, the first of the three great writers of the

French drama, who, with Racine and Molière, may be compared with the famous classic triad of the Greeks.

The English Renaissance.

In England the dawning of the Renaissance begins with the age of Wycliffe and Chaucer. By the death of the former, in 1384, the world lost one of the most sturdy heroes that the fruitful soil of England ever bore, though the great reformers of the sixteenth century throw his figure somewhat into the shade. Wycliffe does not possess the genial vein of a Luther nor the stern greatness of a Calvin. He does not rouse our enthusiasm like the former, nor impress us with fearful admiration like the latter, but he unites many of their excellencies, though he possesses them in less degree. Apart from his work as a reformer, literature owes to him an incalculable debt. He gave to it, indeed, no single work of art, but he gave new ideas and a multitude of stimulating influences. Yet, while a great thinker, he was in no sense of the word a literary artist; for he was too much filled with his subject to care greatly for the form. Of the stiffness of his style his own Bible is full of examples. The Bible which bears his name, however, was really the work of John Purvey, who, at first under Wycliffe's direction, undertook a revision of the Scriptures, and completed it four years after the master's death. This revision is, in truth, a new work, in which not only the errors of the original version are corrected, but the Latinisms in which it abounded are replaced by plain English. In this new

form the so-called Bible of Wycliffe penetrated among all classes of the people, and even during the bloody persecutions of the Wycliffites continued its quiet mission almost without interruption.

At the time when the conflict between Church and State was most violent, and when Wycliffe was beginning to draw upon himself the eyes of patriots, there was considerable talk at the English court about a young man named Geoffrey Chaucer, who belonged to the king's household, and who, both by his personality and his connections, enjoyed the favor of the royal family. He was of a pleasant and attractive disposition, remarkable by the thoughtful, dreamy expression of his face, by a certain tendency to stoutness, which did not, however, develop till later years, and by his susceptibility to love; he was, besides, a pleasant companion, obliging and modest, happy and good-tempered, but frequently taciturn. Occasionally, however, he could show a tendency to roguishness and create astonishment by his superior humor. He was a passionate friend of books, and often passed half the night reading in bed. On many occasions, even thus early, he had appeared as a miracle of learning to those about him—he read Latin as easily as French; he spoke a more select English than others, and it was known that he had composed many beautiful English verses.

The young poet belonged to a well-to-do middle-class family which had many far-reaching connections, and even some influence with the court. The poet thus found early opportunities of catching a glimpse of the great world, and of observing the higher ranks of

society. Even as a boy he may have heard his father, John Chancer, the vintner of Thames street, London, telling of the marvelous voyage he had made to Antwerp and Cologne in the brilliant suite of Edward III, in 1338. When a youth of sixteen or seventeen, Geoffrey served as a page or squire to Elizabeth, duchess of Ulster, first wife of Lionel, duke of Clarence, and daughter-in-law of the king. He bore arms when about nineteen years of age, and went to France in 1359, in the army commanded by Edward III. The campaign, which was ended by the treaty of Bretigny, was not, indeed, distinguished either by its exploits or its results, but it was, nevertheless, eventful enough for the young warrior, and presented to the eyes of the rising poet a rich profusion of motley, living pictures. He saw a grand display of warriors and knightly pomp; the foremost generals of the age—the king, Henry, duke of Lancaster, above all the Black Prince—at the head of their troops; marches and countermarches through the provinces of northern France; the ancient, regal town of Rheims besieged with desperate energy and finally abandoned, unsubdued; numerous smaller expeditions, skirmishes and plundering raids, and, in the intervals, hawking and hunting and other feudal sports; and finally, personal dangers to the poet himself, who was taken prisoner by the French, though the king soon had him ransomed. For an English poet of that period Chaucer had seen and experienced, even in his early years, more than any of his brethren of the craft.

This epoch formed a sort of Indian summer to the age of chivalry, and its spirit found expression in great

deeds of war as well as in the festivals and manners of the court. The ideal which men strove to realize did not quite correspond to the spirit of the former age. On the whole, people had become more worldly and practical, and were generally anxious to protect the real interests of life from the unwarranted interference of romantic aspirations. The spirit of chivalry no longer formed a fundamental element, but only an ornament of life—an ornament, indeed, which was made much of, and which was looked upon with a sentiment partaking of enthusiasm. But now, when devotion to chivalry was no longer the simple outflow of a dominant idea, but rather the product of a pleasant self-conscious reflection, the life and doings of aristocratic society took a very mixed color and a character hard to be defined. Minds ideally constituted strove to fill the traditional molds and formulas with a really ethical substance, and by trying in their own way to transpose these ancient forms into action, developed a really tender and humane disposition. The majority of the people rejoiced merely in the splendor and in the festive, dignified existence that raised them above the commonplace and distinguished them from the vulgar crowd. But in every case there was the intermixture of an incongruous element. The real cavaliers of that age remind us somewhat of Don Quixote, sometimes uniting with a maidenly coyness and modesty the most overmastering desire for battles and adventures, which impelled them over all the world, sometimes thwarting the calculations of a prudent policy by the momentary outbreak of an overstrained sentiment.

In its external appearance and surroundings the aristocratic society of the time also makes a somewhat fantastic impression. With extraordinary stateliness society shows its delight in excessive luxury and overloaded ornamentation. In the dignified and imposing architecture of the age ornamentation frequently plays too large a part. Brilliant tapestry hangings, wall pictures, colored windows surprise us more by their gorgeousness than by their harmony. In forestry and horticulture trees are allowed to grow to their full development, but effects are produced more by a symmetrical arrangement of the groups and individuals and by luxuriant masses of rich foliage than by picturesque variety. In the dress of the higher classes we remark a growing preference for striking and variegated colors, length and width being arbitrarily decided by fashion.

In the midst of this outside world of motley pomp and throbbing life Geoffrey could observe the doings of high and low in various situations. He was early initiated into court intrigues, and even into many political secrets, and found opportunities of studying the human type in numerous individuals and according to the varieties developed by rank in life, education, age and sex. The young poet must have been especially interested by the current forms of intercourse between man and woman, and with his early developed sensuousness and easily excited imagination, which we can certainly attribute to him even then, we may well believe that in this domain he remained no idle spectator.

Lady worship was quite as common in that age as it had been before in the ruling principles of chivalry.

The French erotic poetry had developed a strict code of the duties which husband owed to wife and lover to mistress. In these duties mediæval ideas were seen mixed up with the influence of the old Roman poetry, and especially with the love lore of the experienced Ovid. But the further the idealistic views—which at first underlay the principles of woman worship—disappeared from life, the more extravagant became the forms which that worship assumed, at least in the effusions and precepts of poets; and to this extravagant adoration occasional outbursts of sarcasm and cynicism formed no refreshing contrast. Chivalrous society in England was much less affected than in France with the prevailing tendency which contained such glaring contradictions. Yet, even in the court circles in England could be seen that mixture of a refined gallantry and a rude sensuality, of an artificial and unnatural enthusiasm, which often becomes a sort of mockery, and a realism which verges on the vulgar.

The literature which not only illustrates this mental and moral condition, but also helped to bring it about, begins with the *Romance of the Rose*—that singular and marvelous poem, which, in its two very dissimilar parts, is typical, in more ways than one, of the culture of the vanishing middle ages. Taken all in all, this work of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung was still the most celebrated and best-known book in the French language in the time of Edward III. All the standard French poets of the age were under the influence of one or other of these two poets, or even of both, in so far as they continued to ornament their

poems with mythological and allegorical figures, and in so far as they rarely expressed their feelings, either in epic or lyric poetry, without the intermixture of subtle reflections and an abundant but rather cheap display of learning. The most eminent of the court poets of that period was unquestionably the aged, but still vigorous, Guillaume de Machault, who, in numerous poems, and often in very artistic rhymes, knew how to vary the great theme of love with spirit and frequently with grace. In his whole tendency he reminds us more of Guillaume de Lorris than of Jean de Meung.

In poetry and life, fashion required an educated young man, especially one in the service of the court, to fall in love at the earliest opportunity, and, if possible, hopelessly. Geoffrey cannot have failed to satisfy this demand of high society. In his youth he certainly lost his heart more than once. The vivid traits in the character of a coquette, whom he describes in the earliest of his extant poems, are assuredly not taken from mere observation, but from the most intimate personal experience. And the ideal womanhood which hovers before his mind in the same poem has unquestionably many points of resemblance to a definite earthly personage by whom the young poet's heart and eye had been ensnared. A great passion, which affected the poet for several years in that decisive period between youth and manhood, has left its distant traces in several of his works. The object of this passion is now unknown. Presumably, the lady-love of the young enthusiast was far above him in position and rank, even after his promotion to the rank of a royal scutifer or

armiger, the highest among the minor appointments at the court. At any rate, Geoffrey found out that his first love was hopeless—but he could not tear the image from his heart. The passion must have had deep and lasting effects upon his disposition and on the development of his talents; and this experience, if it did not first kindle his poetry, at least directed it in its destined course.

Nothing has been preserved from his early writings. In the numerous erotic poems of this period, which have been destroyed by an unpropitious fate, in the songs, ditties, lays, roundels, virelays, Chaucer, no doubt, took as his models the French love-poets, and without much difficulty or endeavor he probably surpassed them in simplicity of form and expression. But the fact is very remarkable that from the first, or at least from a very early period, Chaucer wrote in the English language—however natural this may seem to succeeding generations in “The Father of English Poetry.”

Chaucer's youthful attempts in erotic lyrics, as we afterward learn from the testimony of Gower, met with great applause and gradually obtained a wide circulation. A sad event now gave the poet the melancholy occasion for a work of greater art. On September 12th, 1369, died the Duchess Blanche, heiress of Henry, duke of Lancaster, and wife of Prince John of Gaunt, who received with her his investiture to the duchy of Lancaster. This lovely lady, carried off in the flower of her life, had been by her beauty and virtue the chief ornament of the English court. All were in the deep-

est mourning. But it was the special province of the poet to eternize the image of the departed, and to reconcile the pain by glorifying the memories it invoked. The poet may also have been influenced on that occasion by the desire of becoming more intimately acquainted with the duke of Lancaster, who was about his own age, and who, in his many-sided interests, may have previously observed the rising poet's powers. Thus originated the poem on the *Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse*, better known as *The Book of the Duchess*.

In this poem Chaucer had a double task: he had to celebrate the excellencies of Blanche and to depict the sorrow of her mourning lord. With these there was a third essential, of a purely personal kind; the nature of the poem itself must be such as to confirm or anticipate the intimacy beginning, or desired by the poet, between himself and the duke. He represents himself as meeting with the duke, who makes him the confidant of his love and grief. He does not, of course, give us either the name or title of the duke, but introduces him under a slight disguise in a romantic neighborhood, viz., as an unknown knight, who meets the poet in the loneliness of the forest, and whose despairing grief excites the deepest sympathy. The apparent age of the unknown knight does not correspond to that of the duke. His discourses contain no direct reference to well-known persons or events; we learn only the name of the beloved lady, "and goode Faire White she heet." It is not expressly stated, although plainly hinted, that the beloved was also the spouse. But the whole interview is represented as taking place in a dream, and many

references and situations cannot be clearly understood on account of their dreamy indefiniteness.

The poet has at first considerable trouble in inducing the knight to speak. But when the ice is once broken, he shows a great desire to communicate; it is the knight who does nearly all the talking; he becomes excessively loquacious in his descriptions and also in his complaints and invectives. He states very few real facts, but numerous phrases, learned allusions and subtle distinctions. A multitude of ideas and images, which were very common in French literature since the *Romance of the Rose*, appear here for the first time in an English dress—such as reminiscences from classical antiquity or even from the Old Testament, long spun-out allegories, witty and uncouth touches from the wisdom of the mediæval school-men. However much the mind may be distracted by all this learning, parenthetically introduced, we nevertheless frequently hear the voice of real passion from the strange figure, and in some passages of the knight's discourse—as in his invectives against Fortune, or in his complaints, given in antithetic form—the student of Shakespeare is reminded of the great bard's earlier works, especially *Romeo and Juliet*. The whole dialogue, especially at the commencement, is carried through by means of little touches, which have the effect of retarding the progress; not, indeed, in the way such touches are employed in the epic for the attainment of its beautifully proportioned fullness, but as they are employed in the drama—to enliven the whole development as well as the separate scenes, to unfold the characters, and to work out the motives. Thus

early, in the *Book of the Duchess*, we see Chaucer's dramatic tendency. With him the dialogue becomes a kind of dramatic scene; although, indeed, the length of many of the speeches, with their repeated digressions into the domain of general knowledge, is by no means dramatic. But Chaucer, like the true dramatist, sees the speakers vividly before him, and has in his mind's eye the facial expression which accompanies every word they utter. That which we see developed into the highest art in his later poems is thus present in germ in this work of his youth. Besides the long dialogue, the *Book of the Duchess* really contains two other parts—an overture, and before that a prologue.

The overture—if we may use the expression—consists of a series of pictures which pass before the sleeping poet in agreeable succession, and lead up to the dialogue: a bright May morning; awaking in a chamber with beautifully painted windows; sweet singing of birds, with which other tones are soon interblended; the exciting picture of a hunt with a description of the breezy freshness of the forest; and, within this forest, the transition from noisy life to the deepest solitude. In these descriptions we find reminiscences and even borrowings from the *Romance of the Rose* and similar poems closely interwoven with the poet's own vivid ideas and his expressions of a deep sympathy with nature.

The prologue is very attractive and important, and its length exceeds the usual proportions. Its principal motives are borrowed by Chaucer from the *Dit de Morpheus* by Guillaume de Machault; and indeed the in-

fluence of this French poet is very clearly traceable throughout the whole *Book of the Duchess*, as well as in its individual parts. But even in the prologue, where this influence is most evident, the freedom and independence of the English poet is just as clearly evident. What Chaucer borrows he makes really his own, and brings it into a new connection, suited to the higher purposes of his own poetry.

At the beginning Chaucer pictures to us his peculiar condition. For a long time he has been suffering from sleeplessness; this brought on the feeling, very similar to dizziness, which oppresses him. We are only left to conjecture that this condition was brought about by his unfortunate love affair. The poet describes it as a disease that he has suffered eight years, without being a whit nearer his recovery: "for there is but one physician that can heal me—but that is gone! What is not to be, must needs be left." Lying in bed one sleepless night, he reads a book of various contents; further on we learn that this was *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, the favorite work of his youth, and, indeed, also of his later years.

Summary and Conclusion.

The wealth of the period covered by the later Renaissance makes the task of giving the results of a survey of its manifold activities one of extreme difficulty. It is, indeed, sufficiently easy to point out the common element of the time, namely, the revival or the development of the literary genius of Spain, England and France, under the influence of the classic models and

of Italy. In Italy itself the classic impulse had been felt earlier and had borne its best fruits before the middle of the sixteenth century. The time there was one of decadence. Tasso and Giordano Bruno are unquestionably, though in widely different ways, writers of original force. But the author of *Jerusalem Delivered* was a survivor—one, too, who had lived into an unhappy time. His weakness of health and character may have—or rather must have—made him suffer with exaggerated acuteness from the forces which were weighing on the intellect of Italy. Yet on that very account he shows only the more clearly the exhaustion of the race and the deadening influence of the Roman Catholic revival.

As for Bruno, interesting, and in a way attractive, as he is, it is doubtful whether he can be said to have had any literary influence at all. His modern fame is even not quite legitimate, since he owes it in some measure to the circumstances of his death. In his own age he fell rapidly into obscurity. He also had lived into an unhappy time, though he bore himself in it very differently from Tasso. Too Italian to reconcile himself to Calvinism or Lutheranism, too independent in mind to be an obedient son of the Church, from the moment he was asked for more than mere outward conformity to ceremonies, he was destined to be crushed between hammer and anvil in an age of religious strife. There was no room for independence of mind in Italy, and there was to be none for long, as the lives of Galileo and of Fra Paolo Sarpi were to show. It required all the power and the strong political anti-papal spirit of

Venice to preserve Fra Paolo. In literature nothing was any longer quite safe except the more or less elegant presentment of harmless matter. Tasso did the utmost which it was now allowed an Italian poet to achieve. Beyond him there could only be mere echo, as in the case of Guarini. Beyond Guarini the downward path of Italian literature led only to the preciosities and affectations of Marini.

The difficulty of summing up and defining becomes really sensible when an attempt is made to estimate the different ways and the different degrees in which the influence of the Renaissance made itself felt in Spain, England and France. In all three countries it met a strong national genius which it could stimulate, but could not affect in essentials. Garcilaso, Spenser and Ronsard were all equally intent on making a new poetry for their countries, and all three succeeded. Yet they remained respectively a Spaniard, an Englishman and a Frenchman, and in their works were as unlike one another as they were to their common models.

It is, perhaps, fairly accurate to say that the Renaissance influenced each of the three Western countries with increasing force in the order in which they are named. Spain felt it least and France most. When we wish to measure the influence which one literature has had on another, it is surely very necessary to keep the form and the spirit well apart. When only the bulk of what was written, and the bare form and the mere language are allowed for, then it is obvious that the Renaissance did affect Spain very much. The hendecasyllabic, the prevailing use of the double rhyme, the

ottava rima, the capitulo and the canzone were all taken by the Spaniards with slavish fidelity. The very close connection between the languages and the people may have made this minute imitation inevitable. Again, it is not to be denied that Italian had a marked influence on literary Castilian as it was written in the later sixteenth century. Very strict critics have noted the presence of Italian constructions in Cervantes, but the point is one on which no one cares to speak as having authority, and for two reasons. Experience only increases our sense of the danger of expressing opinions as to what is legitimate in a language which is not one's own—and even in one which is. Then, too, before a new phrase is condemned for being foreign we have to settle the preliminary questions, Was it taken from a sister tongue or not? Was it superfluous or not? For instance, the Spaniard who wishes to say, "Of two things the one," and who uses the words "De dos cosas, una," is guilty of a Gallicism, and is wrong, because his own Castilian supplies him with the terser and equally lucid formula, "De dos, una." Yet the French original might have been taken with profit, and very legitimately, if it had been wanted, since it comes from a kindred tongue, and does no violence to the genius of Spanish.

While noting that Italian models were profusely imitated in Spain and Portugal, and that Castilian was perfected as a literary instrument by Italian influence, we can still maintain that the Renaissance bore less fruit in the Peninsula than in France or England. By "fruit" is not meant mere writing, be its mechanical dexterity what it may, but that combination of form

and matter which makes literature, and which before we can call it "national" must savor of the qualities of some one race. Now, when we look at the literary activity of the Peninsula during the golden age, we can find very little which will stand the triple test in matter, form and national character, and of which we can yet say that it shows the spirit of the Renaissance. Portugal can be left aside with a passing salute to the great name, and the real, though hardly proportionate, merit of Camoens. What else we find there is little more than a somewhat weaker version of the learned poetry of Spain, of which it has to be said that it might be deducted without reducing the place of Spanish literature in the world. All men who have written well are entitled to their honor. The Spaniards were skillful workmen, and that, too, in no mean matter. Yet there is a wide difference between the man of whom we can say that if he had never taken pen in hand, his form and his matter might yet be found in equal perfection elsewhere and in foreign tongues, and that other man of whom we are bound to say that if he had remained silent then something would have been missing which no other race could have supplied. Now, if Boscan had never taken the advice of Navagiero, if Garcilaso had never written, if all the learned poets had remained silent, then Spain would not have shown her capacity to produce men who could handle Italian metres competently—and yet her place in the literature of the world would be essentially what it is. The *Celestina*, from which, through the *Novela de Picaros*, came Le Sage and Smollett and Dickens, would remain, and so would

the *Amadis of Gaul*, the romances, the comedia, *Don Quixote*, the great adventures, and Santa Teresa—all, in short, that makes Spanish literature.

Allowing that there was something Spanish which found adequate expression in the golden age, and is also the best of the national literature, there comes the difficulty of finding a definition of that something. To say that there is Spanish quality in las cosas de España, and that this is why they are Spanish, is the explanation of Molière's doctors. Again, it is mere reasoning in a circle to begin by taking it for granted that the learned poets who copied the Italian forms were not truly Spanish, and that therefore Spain was not in essentials influenced by the Renaissance. Either form of absurdity is to be avoided. Perhaps the only way of escape lies in defining what we mean by the spirit of the Renaissance. Without professing to be equal to so great a task, it is permissible to assert that there are certain notes which we describe as of the Renaissance, and to which the Italian, the Frenchman or the Englishman gave expression in forms proper to himself. A love of beauty, a sense of joy, a vehement longing for strong expressions of individual character and of passion, a delight in the exercise of a bold, inquisitive intellect—all these, and the reaction from them, which is a deep melancholy, are the notes of the Renaissance. In the learned poetry of Spain they are rarely heard. The commonplaces of form, with here and there a piety and patriotism which are mediæval and Spanish, are given in their stead. Therefore it is fair to say that the Spaniard was not greatly influenced by the Renaissance

—that there was something in it not congenial to him.

There remains the difficulty of saying exactly what is the Spanish quality of the true cosas de España. Ford, an accepted authority on Spanish literature, who knew the flavor well, gave it a name—the borracha—which, being interpreted, is the wine-skin and the smack it lends to the juice of the grape. The Spaniards say that there are three natural perfumes, and the first of them is the smell of the dry earth after rain. The borracha, and the pungent scent of the ‘aura tellus Iberiæ’ when wet, are not to everybody’s taste. Neither is their equivalent in literature, except where we find it purified and humanized by the genius of Cervantes.

In Spain, then, the Renaissance met something on which it could secure no certain hold, something in a sense barbarous, not quite European, and recalcitrant to all classic influences. In England it met a strong national genius, but not one which was entirely alien. Sidney, Spenser and Marlowe showed the influence of the Renaissance, not as mere imitators of forms, but as Englishmen, and showed it fully. In Shakespeare it was included with much more. The Spaniard either copied the mere form or produced what one feels would have come as a natural growth from the middle ages, the *Libro de Caballerías*, the *Novela de Picaros*, the *Auto Sacramental*, and even the comedia, in which no trace of the classic influence is to be seen. A drama which is in no sense classic might have developed from the Morality and the farce. As much might be said

of the form of the English drama. Seneca might have been forgotten, and Tansillo might never have written, as far as the construction of the English play is concerned. But then much of the Renaissance spirit did pass into Elizabethan literature. We could not deduct what it shared with Italy without fatal loss. The genius of Spenser could, perhaps, have dispensed with a teacher, but as a matter of fact it did not. With no model save Chaucer he would yet have been one of the greatest of poets. He would not have been exactly the poet he was without Ariosto, Tasso and Du Bellay.

Shakespeare had, of all men, the least need to borrow, and yet, without the influence of the Renaissance, we should not have the *Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, or many passages in the plays. The English genius, in fact, accepted and absorbed the Renaissance without losing its native independence. All the manifestations of its freedom were not equally admirable. The wild incoherence of the early dramatists is not good in itself. When we see it at its worst, we are half tempted to wish that Greene and Marlowe had been more subservient. Yet it was good in so far as it was a striving after a national ideal. It was the necessary preparation for Shakespeare and the great things of the Elizabethan drama.

In conclusion it may be said that, while the first period of the English Renaissance was one of imitation and assimilation, it early freed itself from the pseudo-classic mannerism which passed for good taste in Italy, Spain and France. This was, in fact, accomplished in the Elizabethan epoch, whose drama is the real exponent

of the English Renaissance. Depicting feudalism in the vivid colors of an age at war with feudal institutions, breathing into antique histories the breath of actual life, embracing the romance of Italy and Spain, the mysteries of German legend, the fictions of poetic fancy, the facts of daily existence, the humors of the moment and the abstractions of philosophy in one homogeneous product, full of intense vitality, this wondrous birth of the age, with Shakespeare as the master of all ages, left a monument of the Renaissance unrivalled for pure creative power.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON.

(Translated by Denis Florence Mac-Carthy U.R.I.A.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE KING BELSHAZZAR.

DANIEL.

IDOLATRY.

VANITY.

THE THOUGHT.

DEATH.

THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE.

MUSICIANS.

*SCENE—THE GARDEN OF BELSHAZZAR'S
PALACE.*

Belshazzar's Feast.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Enter The Thought, dressed in a coat of many colors, as The Fool, and after him Daniel, detaining him.

Daniel.—Stay!

Thought.— Why stay? the road is free.

Dan.—Stop!

Tho.— Why stop? the coast is clear.

Dan.—Hear me!

Tho.— I don't want to hear.

Dan.—See though——

Tho.— I don't want to see.

Dan.—Who before, in words like these,
 Questioned thus, has thus replied?

Tho.—I, for I, by rules untied,
 I alone say what I please.

Dan.—Say, who art thou?

Tho.—Thy not knowing
 This offends me, I confess:—
 Tells it not to thee this dress
 With a thousand colors glowing,
 Like the many-hued emission
 The chameleon's skin gives out,
 Leaving its true shade in doubt?
 Hear, then, this, my definition:—
 I am of those attributes
 In which deathless being prideth;

I that light am which divideth
Man's high nature from the brute's.
I am that first crucible,
In which fortune's worth is tested—
Swift as sunlight unarrested—
Than the moon more mutable:—
I have no fixed place wherein
To be born, or live, or die.—
On I move, yet know not I
Where to end or to begin.
Fate, how dark or bright it be,
Ever at its side beholds me;
Every human brain enfolds me,
Man's and woman's—none are free.
I am in the king his care,
When he plans his kingdom's weal;
I am vigilance and zeal,
When his favorite's toils I share.
I am guilt's sure punishment,
Self-reproach in the offender;
I am craft in the pretender,
Foresight in the provident.
In the lady, I am beauty;
In the lover, his romance;
In the gambler, hope of chance;
In the gallant soldier, duty;
In the miser, money-madness;
In the wretch, his life's long dearth;
In the joyful, I am mirth;
And in the sorrowful, am sadness;—
And, in fine, thus strangely wrought,
Restless, rapid, on I fly,
Nothing, everything am I,
Since I am the Human Thought.

See, if such strange changes give
Thee, O Man, true views about me,
Since the thing that lives without me,
Scarcely can be said to live.
This I am for each and all,
But to-day I am assigned

To the King Belshazzar's mind—
He for whom the world's too small.
Though in fool's clothes dressed completely,
I am not sole fool; and why?
Just because in public, I
Try my best to act discreetly.
Since a fool 'twere hard to find
More incurable than he
Who would do, or say, or be
What he thought within his mind.—
Thus few wear the fool's-cap feather,
Although most that badge might win,
For, when looked at from within,
We are madmen all together—
Fools of the same kith and kin.
And, in fine, I, being a fool,
Did not like to stop and pause
Here to speak with thee, because
It would outrage every rule,
That we two were joined, and trod
On together, badly mated;
For if "Daniel," when translated,
Meaneth Wisdom as of God,
It were difficult to try
To keep up a conversation,
We being in our separate station,
Wisdom thou, and Folly I.

Dan.—Yet to-day I know no rules
That forbid our casual speaking,
Thou the way of the wise man seeking—
I not stooping to the fool's:
For, although the distance be
Great 'twixt wise and witless words,
Still 'tis from two different chords
Springs the sweetest harmony.

Tho.—Well, I'll answer with decision,
And get over my confusion,
Since it is a right conclusion
Thought should tell the Prophet's vision.

Dan.—Say what pleasure, deeply drawn,
Art thou now in spirit drinking?

Tho.—Of the bridal I am thinking,
Which, to-day, all Babylon
Celebrates with festive roar.

Dan.—Now the bridegroom's name declare.

Tho.—King Belshazzar, son and heir
Of Nabuchadónosór,
Heir of pride, by pride increased:—

Dan.—Who is, then, the happy bride?

Tho.—She who rules the Orient wide—
The fair Empress of the East,
Cradle of day's infancy.

Dan.—An idolatress, is she?

Tho.— Yes,
And so great an idolatress
She is herself Idolatry.

Dan.—Is he not, in marriage vows,
Wed already to a wife,
In the vanity of life?

Tho.—Yes; but then his law allows
Two, or even a thousand wives;
And, though wed to Vanity,
Now for Paganism he,
With imperious passion, strives,
Daniel, or "God's Wisdom," names
(For the two are one) to thee
Given by Scripture.

Dan.— Woe is me!

Tho.—Would you wed yourself the dames
That you thus take on you so? (*Aside.*)
This to tell was wrong, I see.

Dan.—Woe! God's people! woe to thee!
Woe! unhappy kingdom, woe!

Tho.—If the truth were told, thy deepest
Pain is now the contemplating
The great bride-feast celebrating.

While a captive here thou weepst.
 This it is that saddens thee;
 For if he had chanced to wed
 With the Jewish rite instead,
 Thou wouldst be redeemed and free;—

(Clarions are heard.)

Hark! the distant music sounds;
 Now I pass to other things;
 Babylon with rapture rings,
 Every heart with joy rebounds,
 Welcoming, with jubilee,
 The new Wife-Queen. Let us go.

Dan.—Woe! unhappy kingdom, woe!

Woe! God's people! woe to thee! (They retire.)

SCENE THE SECOND.

Peal of trumpets. Enter Belshazzar and Vanity at one side,
 and Idolatry, fantastically dressed, at the other, with Attendants, Followers, etc.

Belshazzar.—Crown thy fair forehead at this feast

With all the dazzling splendor of the East,

If for so bright a diadem

The sun itself is not too dull a gem.

Beauteous Idolatry,

Queen of my kingdom, dearer queen to me,

Thrice welcome be the hour

That thou to Babylon's imperial bower

Hast come; where, o'er thy royal head,

My greatness a fit canopy shall spread—

Presenting at thy feet

The noblest statues, the most rare conceit,

By sculptor ever wrought for man to adore,

Which, with whole holocausts from every shore,

Their fealty shall pay

In gold, in silver, bronze, and stone, and clay.

Idolatry.—Great King of Babylon,

Generous Belshazzar, earth's most potent son,

Whose sacred name sublime

Defeats oblivion and defieeth time,
 Because its Hebrew sense
 Translated, means a hidden and immense
 Unfailing treasure; She—the happy She—
 Empress of Day's fair house—Idolatry,
 Queen of the Orient clime,
 Where the young sun, resplendent and sublime,
 Receives the homage first of wondering eyes—
 Himself the primal source of wonder and surprise—
 She to thy kingdom comes to-day—
 By right she to thy altars finds her way,
 Because, when from the Flood's abysmal throes,
 The World, like some great swimmer, struggling rose,
 Here in this kingdom, here,
 First polity arose, and codes severe,
 And laws commanding and remitting things—
 The human fond idolatry of kings;
 Then followed after the divine,
 With gods and votive flames at every shrine.
 Thus Nimrod was adored;
 Thus Moloch, 'mid the fires that round him roared.
 Nor undeserved such heights of honor deem—
 Nimrod for king was held, Moloch for god supreme.
 Then followed after (a stupendous sight!)
 As many idols as to-day unite
 These bridal-rites auspicious to attend,
 For here with offerings strange, that clash or blend,
 Full thirty thousand barbarous gods behold,
 In clay, in stone, in bronze, in silver, and in gold.

Tho.—(In the background, aside to Daniel.) Could Thought
 himself a happier life invent?

What! thirty thousand gods all different!
 Man need not fear to ask whate'er he choose,
 One god will grant what other gods refuse.—
 And thou, O Judah's Son!
 What canst thou hope to gain from only One
 I tremble but to think of or to name?
 How can one god hear each particular claim
 Among so many?

Dan.—(Aside to Thought.) He alone can hear;
His hand it is that holds the universe, far and near.

Bel.—(To Idolatry.) Speak to fair Vanity, until this morn
My only bride; and since you both were born
Of one idea, my ambitious duty
Is to unite you thus: What loveliness! What beauty!
(He looks from one to the other, standing between
them.)

Idol.—Let me embrace thee, haughty Vanity.

Vanity.—Eternal must such sweet embracements be.

Idol.—Beauty like thine would pierce my heart like steel,
If the divine could aught of envy feel.

Van.—Splendor like thine would turn my heart to stone,
If jealousy were a thing to Vanity known.

Bel.—(Aside.) One day doth darken to another day,
Whilst thus my trembling soul, in sweet dismay,
Doubts which of these is fairer—the sweet face
Of Vanity, or proud Idolatry's grace;
For each is fair, as each fond tongue deceives me,
Or calls me king, or as a god receives me.

Idol.—Why art thou standing in such deep suspense?

Van.—What thought has seized thy mind and drawn it hence?

Bel.—Thy glorious beauty, O Idolatry! fires me;
Thy voice, O Vanity! whispering sweet inspires me.
And thus, in order to divert my sadness,
Moved by thy beauty, and thy words of gladness,
To-day, my grief forsaking,
I wish to woo, and win ye two, thus making
Idolatry be sharer of my glory,
And Vanity proclaim my conquests' wondrous story:—
Of that haughty King Nabuco,
To whose valorous hand triumphant,
To whose majesty and splendor
Fortune, fate, and power were subject;
Of that lightning of Chaldea,
Which, as from a sphere of thunder,
Bursting, left Jerusalem
Weeping 'mid its fires unnumber'd;

Of that king, who captive led
 All that was of Jewish culture,
 Best of blood and birth, who still
 Pine in Babylonian dungeons;
 Of that king who, from the Temple,
 Golden cups and treasures plunder'd—
 Sacred spoil which, round my throne,
 Casts a new and dazzling lustre;
 Of that king, in fine, who fed
 On the green grass and the stubble
 Of the fields, half man, half beast,
 Hair-clad as with plumes of vultures—
 I am son, fair deities.—

And to be in all things worthy
 Of my father's fame and kingdom—
 Of his fame, as of his fury—
 The high gods whom I adore
 Have bestowed such noble nurture
 On me, that my breast, I doubt not,
 Bears repeated, or redoubled,
 His proud spirit: thus succeeding
 To his soul as heir, it worketh
 In my body, if two bodies
 Ever so with one soul flourished:—
 Not to be, then, Sovereign King
 Of the lands that with their currents
 Tigris or Euphrates bathes,
 Or the sun in his effulgence
 Lights—those numerous lands which he
 Rises early from his slumbers
 But to see (that so his task
 May be over ere the sunset)—
 Can the thirst of my ambition
 Satisfy or well keep under;
 Nothing can do that, I feel,
 Be it madness or presumption,
 Until I o'er all these mountains
 Am sole ruler or usurper.
 'Tis the region of Senaar,
 'Tis that rude and rigorous country,

Which beheld, 'twixt heaven and earth,
That stupendous strife and struggle,
When the pride of daring men
Boldly, but with little judgment,
Built, to counteract the gods,
Towers that soared sublimely sunward.
And that thou, O Vanity!
Mayest thy triumph know still further,
Thine, too, O Idolatry!
Listen, and be mute with wonder.

Calmly was the world enjoying,
In its first primeval summer,
The sweet harmony of being,
The repose of perfect structure;
Thinking, in its inner thought,
How from out a mass so troubled,
Which, by poesy, is called
Chaos, and by Scripture Nothing,
Was evolved the face serene
Of this azure field unsullied
Of pure sky, extracting thus,
In a hard and rigorous combat,
From its lights and from its shadows,
The soft blending that resulteth,
From the earth and from the waters,
The elaborate knot that couples,
By dividing and disparting,
Things which (each one taken asunder)
Form a separate something so,
But when all are joined, are nothing:—
She considered how the earth,
Though till then a wild uncultured
Waste it lay, grew bright with flowers,
Painted of a thousand colors;
How the vacant air was peopled
With the blithe birds' flight and flutter;
How the silver sea grew brighter,
As the fish clove through its surges;
How the fire, its torches twain,
Sun and moon, with fresh flames furnished,

Day and nights' undying lamps,
Night and day forever burning.
Finally, she thought of Man,
Who of all His glorious works here
God has fashioned like Himself,
As Creation's crowning wonder:—
Vain of such transcendent beauty,
All restraint she soon trod under,
Since for Beauty to be vain,
Is as ancient as the world is.
Vain and beautiful in truth,
An eternal home she judged it,
Not perceiving that for crimes,
Such as those that she indulged in,
Was reserved a universal
Deluge for her sure destruction.

In this fatal confidence,
Vicious men alone consulted
Their own passions; sin-possessed,
They to gluttony were subject;
They to avarice, anger, lust,
They to pride and self-indulgence.
Growing angry then, the gods,
From whom nothing can be curtailed,
Counsel took to destroy the world,
Which to make had cost such trouble.
Not red deluges of lightnings,
Forged and falling from heaven's furnace,
Worked their wrath; but flames of water—
Since, of gods, the sire and sovereign,
Often thunders with the snow-fall—
Often with the fire inundates:
Covered thick was Heaven with clouds,
Dense, opaque, and dark, and turbid,
For though angry, that it might
Not revoke the absolute justness
Of the world's dread sentence, wished
Not to see the rigorous fullness
Of its own revenge; and thus
Hid itself in clouds and thunder—

Wrapped itself in robes of darkness—
For even God, being God, oft suffers,
When His wrath He most exhibits,
Slight excuses to o'ercome it.

First began a dew as soft
As those tears the golden sunrise
Kisseth from Aurora's lids;
Then a gentle rain, as dulcet
As those showers the green earth drinks
In the early days of summer;
From the clouds then water-lances,
Darting at the mountains struck them,
In the clouds their sharp points shimmer'd—
On the mountains rang their butt-ends;
Then the rivulets were loosened,
Roused to madness, ran their currents—
Rose to rushing rivers—then
Swelled to seas of seas:—O Summit
Of all Wisdom! Thou alone
Knowest how Thy hand can punish!
Drinking without thirst, the globe
Made lagoons and lakes unnumber'd;

Then a mighty sea-storm rushed
Through the rents and rocky ruptures,
By whose mouths the great earth yawns,
When its breath resounds and rumbles
From internal caves. The air,
In a prison dark and murky,
Now was held, which lower air,
When it sought to reach the upper
Roared confined—the palpitation
Of its fierce internal pulses
Making the great hills to shake,
And the mighty rocks to tumble.
The strong bridle of the sand,
Which the furious onset curbeth
Of the white horse of the sea
With its foam-face silver fronted,
Loosened every curling rein,
So that the great steed, exulting,

Rushed upon the prostrate shore,
With loud neighing, to o'errun it.
The scared wild beasts, dispossessed
Of the savage caves that nursed them,
Flying to air-piercing peaks,
Might have thought, with slight presumption,
They were birds. The birds, too, swimming,
Might have thought some power had turned them
Into fishes; and the fishes,
Seeing earth's great caves and culverts,
Might have thought themselves transformed
Into land-beasts; for so jumbled
Was each separate species, that
In this moment of convulsion
(*'Twixt two waters, as we say*
Of a man in doubt and trouble),
The poor bird, and beast, and fish
Roamed disconsolate and discursive,
Seeking where skin, scale, and plume
Might some sheltering home discover.

And at the last paroxysm,
When despair's lethargic dullness
Numbed each nerve, in mighty fragments
Burst the world's great frame asunder:
And as one, when drowning, strives,
With convulsive arm, to struggle
'Mid the waves, which, at their will,
Raise or sink him like the plummet,
Thus the World, in life's last throes,
Struggled so, and so was worsted.
Here a palace was prostrated,
There was hid a peak's proud summit,
Until utterly o'erwhelmed,
Amid groans and dying murmurs,
To the depth of forty cubits,
Water every portion covered—
Tomb too small for corse so great,
Was the ocean it lay under.
Forty sunless mornings rose,
For the clouds hung dark and dusky,

Mourning the sad obsequies
Of the mighty form defunct there.
That first saving ship alone,
Safe 'gainst every wild wave's bluster,
Borne upon the swelling sea,
Floated free o'er all its surface—
In such vicinage to the stars,
Near, so near, the day-star's lustre,
Venus was its topmast's lantern,
And its beacon-fire Arcturus:—
To this ship had Noe's care
What remained of the world conducted,
There depositing, in safety,
Every species that earth nurtures,
Till the moment came, the sea,
To its God-given laws made subject,
Wondering, saw once more, once more,
The pale earth, now moist and musty,
With its tangled, matted hair,
Full of wrinkles, cracked and crumpled,
Lifting up its mournful face,
Touched, but warmed not, by the sunbeams,
Lifting its sad countenance,
Draped with sea-weeds, dank and muddy,
And in silent eloquence,
With a grateful heart saluting,
O'er the Ark, the bow of peace,
Shining golden, green, and ruddy.—
Thus men's second Adam came,
And a second birth resulted
In the numerous living things
With which all the earth was furnished.
Nimrod, son of Canaan, heir
Of the thrice-transmitted curses,
He and his, a hateful brood,
Full of evil and injustice,
All the broad lands of Chaldea,
With their families and sons there,
Occupied; their sons, of whom
Each was of a size so bulky,

As to seem a moving mountain,
Formed of members and of muscles.
These, then seeing that an Ark
Saved the world, conspired, consulted,
With a fabric more ambitious—
With a safe and surer structure—
How to counteract Heaven's anger,
By a force so proud and stubborn,
As might, in a second deluge,
Save, restore, and reconstruct them.
They to make a lofty tower
Mountains upon mountains tumbled,
And the proud neck of the earth,
Bending 'neath so great a burden,
Felt as if it needs must break
From the pressure that it suffered,
So that with the weight it groaned,
So that with the load it shudder'd.
Higher grew the tower, and higher
The ambition of the workmen
To a double height to raise it,
For there were none there but further'd
The great work, intent to see
The tall tower's stupendous structure—
Straight as the Ionic column,
Strong and simple as the Tuscan,
A huge hindrance to the winds,
The moon's plaything and obstructor.
Now with its imposing front
Had it the blue sky encumber'd,
And its great trunk in the air,
As with shadowy night had blurr'd it,
When, in all the pomp and pride
Of this daring and presumption,
Heaven was pleased to stop its course,
For it was displeased, disgusted
To behold the attempt to scale
Heaven's high walls, by God constructed.
And that, therefore, by assault
Man should never gain the summit,

It such varied forms of language
 Introduced among the workmen,
 That not one could understand
 Even the words himself had muttered.
 Voices mingled all together
 Inharmoniously concurrent—
 Sounds were spoken, human sense
 Ne'er before had heard or utter'd;
 This one knew not what was said,
 What he heard confused the other,
 So that every order given
 Caused confusion, cries, and blunders.
 Two and seventy tongues were those,
 Which these men with strange and sudden
 Impulse spoke—it pleasing Heaven
 To inspire so great a number.—
 Two and seventy dialects
 Echo, which each sound redoubles,
 Quickly formed from every tongue;
 So that men, confused and puzzled,
 Almost rushed from their own selves—
 That is, if one e'er so rushes.

And so ceased the mighty siege:
 Nothing from the attempt resulted—
 Nothing of that wondrous fabric—
 Nothing of that glorious structure.
 For a cloud, with storm-fire pregnant,
 That to a more swift destruction
 It might bring it, from its entrails
 Darted flames, and smoke, and sulphur,
 Making of the tower's high daring
 Its own solemn tomb sepulchral—
 Monument, and pyre, and urn,
 Of its ruined walls constructing.

I, then, seeing that my breast
 Even for Nimrod's glory thirsted,
 Think that from the existing ashes
 Of the tower that so has crumbled,
 I am he who should rebuild it.
 Since in synchronous conjunction

Vanity and Idolatry

To this high achievement urge me:
Since if thou wilt give the boldness
That to empire must conduct me;
If, for me, the gods thou movest—
If thou, Vanity, giv'st me succor,
If, Idolatry, thou dost aid me,
Who will dare deny, distrustful,
That thus, desperate and undaunted,
I so great a deed can compass?
Idolizing thy proud beauty—
Vain of thine, too, so effulgent—
Sacrificing to thy idols,
Of thy favor ever trustful,
Kneeling reverent at thy altars,
In fruition of thy fulness,
Upon plates of gold and silver,
High embossed or deeply sculptured,
Shall my name endure forever,
While the years of time are numbered.

Idol.—At thy feet thou'lt see me lie,
Ever fond, and faithless never.

Van.—Ever, O Belshazzar! ever,
Of thy life, the light am I!

Idol.—Wouldst thou have a god's position?—
Thee, as God, will I adore!

Van.—And my wings, that thou may'st soar,
I will give to thy ambition!

Idol.—Crowned by me, thy star shall live,
Though the dark cloud round it gathers.

Van.—I, a ladder of light feathers,
So to scale the sun, will give!

Idol.—I, in sculpture's fair relief,
Shall thy form to time hand down!

Van.—I, the laurel of thy crown
Shall increase by many a leaf!

Bel.—Give me both your hands: I've trod
Doubtful paths, but this embracing—

This close bond—this interlacing—
What shall break?

Dan.—(Advancing.) The hand of God!

Bel.—Who has ventured—who is he
That has dared this bold reply?

Tho.—I it was not.

Bel.— Who, then?

Dan.— I!

Bel.—How, O Jew! and can it be,
That you thus so bold have grown,
In Jerusalem, the holy,
Late a captive, now a lowly
Dweller here in Babylon?
Exiled from that natal sod,
Which a home, a shelter, gave you;
Poor and wretched, what can save you
From my power? . (Half draws his dagger.)

Dan.— The hand of God!

Bel.—(Aside.) Oh! this potent voice that dares me—
Strong to stop the heart's pulsations—
Makes me wonder at my patience,
From my very anger scares me;
Something strange, mysterious, odd,
Marks us two.—(Aloud.) Since I intend thee
Here to die, can aught defend thee?
Speak! say what?

Dan.— The hand of God!

Tho.—(Aside.) How he the upper hand maintains!

Van.—Leave him, for I can't express,
How I loathe his lowliness.

Idol.—How his faith my faith disdains!

Bel.—Safe from my chastising rod
Take your life; but you should know,
It to these two queens you owe,
Not unto the hand of God!
(Exit with Vanity, Idolatry, and Attendants.)

SCENE THE THIRD.

Daniel, Thought.

Thought.—You have got off nicely now,
 And I thank you for the lesson,
 Since when any troubles press on
 My attention, I know how,
 In a moment's time, to clear me;
 I, not knowing why or wherefore,
 Need but say "God's hand," and therefore
 Every soul about must fear me.
 Since the thing's so nicely planned,
 That at hand good guardians hide here,
 Let us, shaking hands, divide here;
 Go, in God's name, to God's hand.

(Exit.)

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Daniel. Presently, Death.

Daniel.—Who, O Lord of night and day!
 Can endure these dread offences—
 Sinful Vanity's pretences,
 Bold Idolatry's display?
 Who will end so great an ill?
 Who will give my faith full scope,
 'Neath the buckler of my hope,
 To avenge such wrongs?

(Enter Death, wearing a sword and dagger, and
 dressed symbolically in a cloak covered with
 skeletons.)

Death.—

I will.

Dan.—Awful shape, to whom I bow,
 Through the shadowy glooms that screen thee,
 Never until now I've seen thee;
 Fearful Phantom, who art thou?

Dea.—Daniel, thou Prophet of the God of Truth,
 I am the end of all who life begin,

The drop of venom in the serpent's tooth,
The cruel child of envy and of sin.
Abel first showed the world's dark door uncouth,
But Cain threw wide the door and let me in;
Since then I've darkened o'er life's checker'd path
The dread avenger of Jehovah's wrath.
From Sin and Envy, then, I first drew breath,
That these two furies might possess my breast;
Through envy is it that I give white death
To all who have the light of life possessed;
Through sin it is my dark breast treasureth
Death for the soul, for souls die like the rest:
If to expire doth bring, with dolorous dole,
Death to the body, sin doth kill the soul.
If from God's Judgment thou thy name dost take,
And I, with fatal flash, must strike the blow,
Since 'neath my feet as victims I must make
All things that live, or think, or breathe, or grow,
Why art thou frightened at me? Why dost quake
With what is mortal in thee, weak and low?

Take courage, then, and let us two, to-day,
God's Judgment thou, and I His Power display.
Though 'tis no wonder thou art frightened—no,
Even wert thou God, to look and gaze on me,
Since when will come the flower of Jericho—
The blood-bright beauteous rose of Calvary,
He, in his human part, though God, will show
A trembling fear; and when He yields to me,
The stars will fall, spark after mighty spark—
The moon grow pale, and even the sun grow dark.
This hapless fabric shall appear to fall,
This lower sphere shall feel the earthquake's shock;
The earth shall faint as at the end of all,
And flower on flower lie crushed, and rock on rock;
Long ere the evening spreads her purple pall,
Long ere the western sky shall fold his flock
Of fleecy clouds, the day shall die, and night
Don its dark cloak in mourning for the light.
But my sole duty in this present hour,
O Wisdom sent of God! is thee to obey;

Give thy commands, the deathless need not cower,
 And that which cannot die, may surely slay;—
 Mine is the arm, but thine the motive power—
 Mine is the work, but thou must point the way;
 So great my thirst of life is, that its rage
 Not even an angry deluge could assuage.
 The proudest palace that supremely stands,
 'Gainst which the wildest winds in vain may beat—
 The strongest wall, that like a rock withstands
 The shock of shells, the furious fire-ball's heat:
 All are but easy triumphs of my hands—
 All are but humble spoils beneath my feet;
 If against me no palace wall is proof,
 Ah! what can save the lowly cottage roof?
 Beauty, nor power, nor genius, can survive,
 Naught can resist my voice when I sweep by,
 For whatsoever has been let to live,
 It is my destined duty to see die.

With all the stern commands that thou may'st give,
 I am, God's Judgment, ready to comply;
 Yea, and so quickly shall my service run,
 That ere the word is said the deed is done!
 In the brief respiration, which between
 The heart and lip doth flow, while life doth last,
 The movement of the marvelous machine
 Will, by a breath be stopped, and all be past!
 Corse of itself, the heart will then be seen
 To fall, like some lost world through chaos cast,
 And that which was the throne of life become,
 By just decree, its sepulchre and tomb.
 I Nimrod's fields shall waste with burning fire,
 I shall bring low proud Babel's rabble rout,
 I shall the dreams of Behemoth inspire,
 I shall the plagues of Israel pour out,
 I Naboth's vines shall stain with dyes of Tyre,
 I the bold front of Jezebel shall flout;
 I shall revengeful Absalom's beard make red
 With the warm blood of Amnon foully shed!
 I shall the majesty of Achab smite,
 Dragged in his crimson chariot o'er the plain;

I with the daughters of the Moabite
The unsullied tents of Zambri shall profane;
I shall the spears of Joab guide aright,
And if a greater glory I can gain,
I shall inundate, in my sateless mood,
Senaar's broad plains with lost Belshazzar's blood!

Dan.—Minister severe and just,
Agent of an angry God,
Thou whose dread judicial staff
Is a scythe and not a rod;
Since we two His dread tribunal
Represent here, I would not
That the awful book's decree—
Book that, in all strictness, ought
To be book the best remembered,
But which is the most forgot,
You should execute, until,
In a voice with pity fraught,
You have given him needful warnings,
Ere his final doom is wrought.
King Belshazzar's name doth mean
Hidden treasure, and I know
That, 'mong men, their souls, unseen,
Like a hidden treasure glow.
Hls I wish to win; and thus
Only give thee leave to go
To Belshazzar, to awake him
To a sense of coming woe:
Make him think that he is mortal;
And as anger the swift blow
Oft suspends, the sharp sword clutching
Ere that it unsheathes it—so
I permit that you should clutch it,
But that you unsheathe it, no.

(Exit.)

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Death, solus.

Death.—Woe is me! how great a yoke
On my hapless head you throw!

O'er my feet what chains of ice!
 O'er my hands what numbing snow!
 By thy precepts bound, O thou
 Type of God's unfathomed course!
 Death is without any vigor,
 Anger without any force.
 That he is a mortal man,
 To remind him, and no more,
 Faintly adumbrates my rigor,
 Gives my voice, but not my roar.—
 Thought, come hither.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Thought, Death.

Thought.— Who doth call me?

Death.—I am he who called.

Tho.— And know

I am just the one who'd rather
 Ne'er be called to thee to go.

Dea.—Why, what reason have you?

Tho.— Dread.

Dea.—What is dread?

Tho.— The fear I show.

Dea.—What is fear?

Tho.— Why, fear is terror.

Dea.—What is terror?

Tho.— Pictured woe.

Dea.—Ah! you speak an unknown language;
 None of all these things I know.

Tho.—Then you give the thing you have not.

Dea.—It, not having, I bestow.

Tell me, where is now Belshazzar?

Tho.—In the garden there below,
 With the two he worships.

Dea.— Place me

With him. Swift as winds that blow,
Bear me thither.

Tho.— I will do so,
Since the courage to say no
Wholly fails me.

Dea.— How most just
Is God's precept this doth show,
That to make him think of me,
With his very Thought I go. (Exeunt.)

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

Enter Belshazzar, Idolatry and Vanity.

Idolatry.—Oh! my lord, what sudden sadness—

Vanity.—Oh! my lord, what painful throe—

Idol.—Interrupts thy conversation?

Van.—Thus disturbs thy fancy so?

Belshazzar.—Ah! I know not this strange pain.

SCENE THE EIGHTH.

Enter Thought, followed by Death.

Thought.—(To Death.) Come, he's here.

Belshazzar.— I only know

I was thinking of the threats
By the prophet's voice foretold,
In what way God's promised hand
Would its vengeance wreak.

(The Thought recedes, letting him see Death, who
was behind him.)

Dea.— Behold!

Bel.—What is this I see, O Heavens?—
Phantom, that no blood doth warm,
Vision, felgning form and voice,
Without having voice and form!
Say, how didst thou enter here?

Dea.—With his light the bright sun throws
Shadow also: I'm the shadow,

If he as the World's Life glows,
 I am the World's Death, and thus
 I can go where'er he goes;
 Since to lights and shadows space
 Equally possession owes.

Idolatry.—(Aside.) Who is this at sight of whom
 We two here are left forlorn?

Bel.—Why at every step of thine
 Does my pride seem backward borne?

Dea.—'Tis because thy steps turn back;
 Mine press on untired, unworn.

Tho.—(Aside.) It was wrong in me, I see,
 To have borne him to his bourne.

Bel.—Say, what wouldst thou, and who art thou,
 Light or Shadow?

Dea.— I'm no more
 Than a creditor of thine,
 Who wants payment of the score.

Bel.—What do I owe thee? What do I owe thee?

Dea.—Here is the whole debt you owe,
 In this note-book written down.

(Takes out a memorandum-book.)

Bel.—'Tis a false and treacherous blow,
 For this note-book is mine own,
 Lost by me some time ago.

Dea.—Yes; but then the memoranda
 Which you lost, I found;—and so
 Read them.

Bel.—(Reading.) "I, the great Belshazzar,
 Of Nabuco-Donosór
 Son, confess my mother's womb
 Me in sin conceived and bore,
 And that I received a life—
 (Oh! I freeze to read it o'er!)
 Which I'm bound to pay to Death,
 When and where, on sea or shore,
 He is pleased the debt to claim:—
 'Tis the primal bond of yore

Moses' pen transcribed, to which
 Adam, Job, and David bore
 Their attestation." 'Tis too true,
 I confess it; but implore
 For my life extended time.

Dea.—Well, I'm liberal now, the more
 That this is not the fixed day
 When God's Mercy will be o'er.
 And that you, Belshazzar, may
 Recollect the debt hencefore,
 Take this note of highest wisdom,
 On the dread memorial pore.
 (Exit, giving Belshazzar a paper.)

SCENE THE NINTH.

Belshazzar, Idolatry, Vanity, The Thought.

Belshazzar.—"It is written, how the Spirit
 Spoke to man these words of woe:
*Dust thou wert, and dust thou art,
 And dust thou'rt doomed to be."* Oh! no:
 Was I dust, and I immortal?
 Am I dust, yet no end know?
 Can I yet be dust?—the mighty?—
 'Tis delusion to say so.
 (Stands musing, while Thought moves rapidly round
 him.)

Thought.—I, the Thought, as fool, dance round
 All my masters, high and low.

Bel.—Is not Idolatry divine?

Tho.—(Moving toward Idolatry.) Lady, now to you I go.

Bel.—Is not Vanity a goddess?

Tho.—(Moving toward Vanity.) Now to you my cares I owe.
 (Moves round both.)

Bel.—How my vacillating Thought
 "Twixt the twain goes to and fro!

Idolatry.—(To Vanity.) What can this strange scroll contain,
 That can thus divert him so
 From ourselves?

Vanity.—(Taking the paper from him.) In this way we
Will find out.

Tho.— A clever throw!

The memorial of Death
Vanity takes from him so.

Bel.—What is this that passes from me?

Van.—Useless leaves that thus I throw
To the winds, to be their sport.

(Tears up the paper, and scatters the pieces about.)

Bel.—Then you both were here? Is't so?

Idol.—What has happened?

Bel.— Oh! I know not;

Some knight-phantom, spectre, ghost,
All engrossed my phantasy,
My discourse, my words engrossed:
But whate'er the phantom was,
It, with all its horrid host,
Has vanished. Was it much
Night fled frightened—sure to know
That in your bright eyes the sun
Would be seen so soon to glow?
And not only unto me,
Not to me, it seems, alone,
Shines the light that thus illumines me—
Beams the splendor o'er me thrown—
But to the whole garden: since
Dark was the red orient zone
Of the sun, till you it saw;
Then, indeed, the morn arose—
Rose with double light; your eyes
Flash two suns; your cheeks disclose
Two auroras;—waiting these
Day kept dark his realm of rose.

Van.—Since we're suns, then, and auroras,
From its world-wide worship old,
Idolatry must be the sun,
I the aurora, pale and cold,
By the greater light outshone.
Thus to her the valley owes

All the splendor it enjoys;
Since from shadowy night's repose
'Tis not the aurora wakes it,
But another sun that glows!

Idol.—I concede that thou'rt aurora,
And to give thee first place so,
I concede that I'm the sun;
For 'tis on the beauteous snow
Of aurora's clouds of pearl
That the sun's first roses glow.
And her light thus being the first
Over his a charm to throw,
Then aurora's light must be
Fairer than the sun's can show,
Since it shone into the valley
Earlier than the sun's could go.

Tho.—Wit and Beauty here compete
Which the higher place shall hold;
And since now the garden bowers,
In sweet rivalry enrolled,
Call us to their founts and flowers—
On this couch of green and gold,
Woven by the hand of spring,
Sit ye down. The birds' sweet notes
Woo us, and among the boughs
A delicious soft air floats
Murmuring music, while the leaves
Tremble as its breath steals o'er—
Where in flowing fragrance glide
Streamlets by an emerald shore,
And in frankincense and myrrh
Spreads the meads' enameled floor.

(They all sit down, Belshazzar being in the midst.
Idolatry takes off his hat, and fans him with the
plume.)

Idol.—With this beauteous tuft, whose plumes
Vanity's fair fingers wove
From the peacock's radiant tail,
Worthy of the wife of Jove,
I will fan thee.

Tho.— Wer't not better
That was left to me, who go
Thus about, the subtle fan
Of the Thought? But no; not so—
Since 'tis only in appearance
A Japan-faced fan I show.

Van.—Listening to my voice and lute,
Shall the light breeze linger o'er.

Bel.—Oh! the music of aurora
Shall not touch the inmost core
Of my heart with tenderer feeling
Than the song your sweet lips pour,
Even when morn, with pearl and flower,
Welcomes the young day once more.

Van.—(Singing). *Yes, Belshazzar is divine,
Since to-day to his high praises
Statues proud Idolatry raises,
Vanity erects a shrine.*

SCENE THE TENTH.

Enter Death.

Death.—(Aside.) Borne in rapid flight along,
Here sweet notes salute mine ears,
False as are the crocodile's tears—
Fatal as the siren's song.
Vanity hath done this wrong,
Driving from his thoughtless brain
All remembrance of my pain.
Let my shadow then affright him,
Let my awful shape excite him
To new fears, since words are vain.
Henbane and the poppy's juice
With your slumberous spells enthrall him;
Let my pallid shape appal him
In the dreams that you produce.
Pour, as from some Stygian sluice,
Visions words cannot express,
Typical of me no less—

Frenzy, lethargy, illusion,
Poison, horror, and confusion. (Belshazzar sleeps.)

Vanity.—Seems he not to slumber?

Idolatry.— Yes,

Van.—Then a glad delusive show,
From the realm of shadows taken
(That more proudly he may waken),
I athwart his dreams shall throw. (Exit.)

Idol.—I desire, too, he should know
To what daring heights and deeps
My proud pinion soars and sweeps. (Exit.)

Thought.—Here I lay my burden down,
For I only sleep, poor clown,
When my lord Belshazzar sleeps. (Lies down to sleep.)

SCENE THE ELEVENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought asleep; Death.

Death.—Man the rest of slumber tries,
Never the reflection making,
That, O God! asleep and waking,
Every day he lives and dies;
That a living corse he lies,
After each day's daily strife,
Stricken by an unseen knife,
In brief lapse of life, not breath,
A repose which is not Death,
But what death is teaches life:—
Sugared poison 'tis, which sinks
On the heart which it o'ercometh,
Which it hindereth and benumbeth.—
And can a man then live who poison drinks?—
'Tis forgetting, when the links,
That gave life by mutual fretting
To the Senses, snap, or letting
The imprisoned five go free,
They can hear not, touch, or see:—
And can a man forget this strange forgetting!—

It is frenzy, that which moves
Heart and eyes to taste and see
Joys and shapes that ne'er can be:—
And can a man be found who frenzy loves?—
 'Tis a lethargy that proves
 My best friend;—in trust for me,
 Death's dull, drowsy weight bears he,
 And, by failing limb and eye,
 Teaches man the way to die:—
 And can a man then seek this lethargy?—
'Tis a shadow, which is made
Without light's contrasted aid,—
Moving in a spectral way,
Sad phantasmal foe of day:—
And can a man seek rest beneath such shade?—
 Finally, 'tis well portrayed
 As Death's Image: o'er and o'er,
 Men have knelt its shrine before,
 Men have bowed the suppliant knee,
 All illusion though it be:—
 And can a man this Image then adore?—
Since Belshazzar here doth sleep,
Since he hath the poison drank,
Since he treads oblivion's blank,
Since no more his pulses leap,
Since the lethargy is deep,
Since, in horror and confusion,
To all other sight's exclusion,
He has seen the Image—seen
What this shade, this poison mean—
What this frenzy, this illusion:
Since Belshazzar sleepeth so,
Let him sleep and never waken,
Be his body and soul o'ertaken
By the eternal slumber.

(He draws his sword, and is about to kill him.)

SCENE THE TWELFTH.

Daniel rushes in.

Daniel.—

No!

(He holds back the arm of Death.)

Death.—Who withholds my arm?

Dan.—

Thy blow

So to stop, 'tis I: because
Payment is not due: to laws
Life and death are subject still,
Till their number they fulfill,
Thou, O Death! perforce must pause.

Dea.—And thy weeks their round will fly

(Cruel fate! O pain severe!),
They will end and disappear
When the Sinless One will die
For the sinner's sake: But why,
O thou judge of what I dare!
Why delay? With scornful air
They to-day mock me and thee—
Listen, there is Vanity,
Look, Idolatry is there.

SCENE THE THIRTEENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought, asleep; Death, Daniel, Vanity, Idolatry; A Statue.

The back scene opens: at one side a bronze equestrian statue is seen, the bridle of which is held by Idolatry; and at the other side, upon a tower, Vanity appears, plumed with many feathers, and having an instrument in her hand.

Idolatry.—Babylon's great king, Belshazzar,
Thou who, in sweet sleep's soft meshes,
Thus the sepulchre of thyself,
Dlest living or livest deadened. . . .

Vanity.—Babylon's great king, Belshazzar,
Thou who on the fresh and verdant

Turf-tomb of the spring here liest
 Corse-like, yet with soul unsevered. . . .

Belshazzar.—(In his sleep.) Who doth call me? who doth call me?

But if I my dreams may credit,
 Still, O Vanity! still I see thee,
 O Idolatry! still thou'rt present.

Idol.—I, divine Idolatry,
 From the sun-god first descended,
 Unto thee to raise this statue,
 Come from Heaven's high halls eternal,
 That your Image on the earth
 May be revered and respected.

Van.—I, the Vanity of the world,
 In the abysses first engendered,
 And 'mong men being born, for sphere
 Have Heaven's vacant void selected,
 Worthily to enshrine thy statue,
 I this fair fantastic temple,
 Dedicate to thee, this structure,
 Built upon the wind with feathers.

Bel.—(In his sleep.) Oh! what triumphs so exalted,
 Oh! what flatteries sweet and pleasant,
 Altars, offerings, prayers, and incense,
 Thou, Idolatry, dost present me;—
 Oh! to think that my proud statue
 With the mightiest shall be reckoned:—
 Rise! O Vanity! rise and crown thee
 With Dominion's circling emblems—
 Prove your essence, one by rising,
 One by falling, prove your essence.

(The Statue descends, and the Tower rises, while
 Vanity and Idolatry sing.)

Idol.—(Singing.) *Down, O Statue, down to be
 Worshipped wide on every shore.*

Van.—(Singing.) *As a shrine for evermore,
 Rise, O Tower of Vanity!*

Idol.— *Downward sink!*

Van.— *And upward soar!*
The Two.— *Since to-day the breezes bore. . . .*
Idol.— *Statues consecrate to me. . . .*
Van.— *And a shrine to Vanity.*

Death.—Daniel, oh! my hand let loose;
 Let me with one bold stroke level,
 Even as mighty Samson once,
 Both the idol and the temple:—

Daniel.—I shall leave it—O swift comet
 Winged with fire!—unchecked, unfetter'd,
 When the day of wrath comes round:
 But until that day descendeth,
 This bronze statue shall recall
 To his mind another metal,—
 Yea, a brazen trumpet, which,
 Touched by my command, shall threaten,
 Like the trumpet of the Judgment.

Dea.—For us both this course is better,
 Since when that dread trumpet soundeth,
 The whole universe must tremble
 To its base and die: and so,
 O thou mighty mass of metal,
 In thy breast, even as its soul,
 Say what damnéd spirit dwelleth!
 Bare thyself even to thyself,
 False bronze deity or devil! (Exit, with Daniel.)

SCENE THE FOURTEENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought, asleep; Vanity, Idolatry,
 The Statue.

Statue.—King Belshazzar!

Belshazzar.— Oh! what would'st thou,
 Strange illusion, phantom, spectre,
 Why afflict me, why attack me?

Sta.—List! and let the waking senses
 Of the soul attend and hear me,

While those of the body rest them;
 I, against Idolatry turn,
 Turn as if a brazen serpent,
 Since, even as a serpent dies,
 I must die in mine own venom;
 And while my hard lip of bronze
 Slowly gives its iron message,
 Let those flatteries of the wind,
 Song and music, be suspended.

I that Statue am, which he,
 Nabuchodonosor saw, of many
 Metals made, with feet of clay,
 Which a stone, by heaven directed,
 Struck and crushed, a stone which fell
 From the mountain of God's mercy:—
 No, in vain thou would'st extort
 Worship which high heaven rejecteth,
 For I once, such worship seeking
 From the Hebrew youths, God's servants,
 Lit the Babylonian furnace,
 Where, indeed, their faith was tested
 By the fire that raged around them,
 But in which it was not melted.
 Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago,
 By their lives this day attest it.

All the gods whom thou adorest,
 Matter-formed of earth are earthy;
 Thou adorest bronze in Moloch,
 Gold in Astaroth thou respectest,
 Wood in Baal, clay in Dagon,
 Stone in Baalin, and the welded
 Iron in the gods of Moab:—
 And as now my voice expresses
 The great God's decree, ye two
 To its metal sounds surrender!—
 Rend your feathers! break your statues!

(The Statue rises and the Tower descends.)

Vanity.—Oh! I burn.

Idolatry.—

With cold I tremble!

Van.—In the rays of another sun
Has my flight abruptly ended.

Idol.—In the light of another faith
Has my darkness been disperséd.

(Vanity and Idolatry disappear, and the scene closes.)

SCENE THE FIFTEENTH.

Belshazzar, Thought.

Belshazzar.—(Awaking.) Hear me! linger! listen! wait!
Oh! do not so soon desert me,
Such sweet Vanity! such proud rapture!

Thought.—(Awaking.) Why this outcry? what affects thee?

Bel.—Ah! my Thought, I do not know:—
Since, when as a god I felt me,
Since, when sovereign lord I called me,
And awake from such sweet error,
'Tis thy foolishness alone,
'Tis thy folly I find present.

Tho.—What has passed then? What has happened?

Bel.—In pale sleep, as here I rested,
I beheld my various glory
In one dazzling dream collected.
High I saw my Vanity soar,
Till her starry brows touched heaven,
From her golden empire down
My Idolatry descended.
This to me a Statue raised,
That a glorious Fane erected,
And they scarce had raised the two,
That the Statue, this the Temple,
When a voice of bronze, a trumpet,
Which even yet doth make me tremble,
Burned, of this, the feathery fane—
And of that, the image melted—
Leaving to the winds the spoil
Of their ruins' smoking embers. . . .

Woe is me! poor Vanity
Is the fleeting flower whose freshness
Blooms upon the almond tree,
And the rose, whose blood is reddened
By the Sun, Idolatry;
That, with facile fall surrenders
Easily to the first faint sigh,
Which the angry north wind threatens;
This, when absent dies the day,
Faints, or folds the crispéd velvet
Of its buds. Brief sun, brief rose,
Against Time's assaults so helpless!

SCENE THE SIXTEENTH.

Belshazzar, The Thought, Idolatry.

Idolatry.—No, a voice shall not conclude my story,
No fraud shall rob my triumphs and my glory;—
The pomp that I display,
Shall make this night outshine the light of day.—
Belshazzar, Prince Supreme,
For thee a god, more than a king, I deem.
Whilst thou in sweet suspense
Of sleep gave rest to every weary sense,
Making a truce with thought,
My love, with thy best interests ever fraught,
Its faithful watch would keep,
For fond affection knows not how to sleep.
A supper, rich and rare,
Full of all dainties cunning could prepare,
Things yet unknown to taste,
Are all, by my prevision, duly placed:
What every sense could wish
Breathes from each vase, or tempts from every dish:
Upon the sideboards glow
Rich gold and silver vessels all a-row,
And many a costly prize,
Whose brightness gives a dropsy to the eyes.
Sweetest perfumes

Breathe their delicious fragrance through the rooms
 From emerald braziers filled with souls of flowers
 That died in fair Arabia's happy bowers:
 Sole food, as thou thyself can'st tell,
 That satisfies the hunger of the smell.
 The music, too, in well-accorded note,
 Nor yet too near, nor yet too far remote,
 From many a silken string, and mellow horn,
 Quenches the thirst wherewith the ear is born.
 The table-cloths of white,
 Around whose 'broidered edges pinks unite
 With clustered lilies, which commingled throw
 A brighter brightness o'er the blinding snow
 On which they lie; give to the wondering touch,
 A smooth surprise it cannot feel too much.
 Nectar, ambrosia, such as gods might claim,
 Cold, icy drinks 'tis freshness but to name,
 From the rich orange and the rose distilled,
 For thee, in golden goblets shall be filled,
 To please thy taste, that so in joyous state,
 With every course the cups should alternate.

And that these cups may be
 To-day the surest proof of victory,
 The vessels sacred then to Israel's God,
 Which Nabuchodonosor, unawed,
 Bore off from great Jerusalem, the day
 When a remoter East received his sway,
 Command them here to bring:—
 This night, with them, thou'lt pledge the Gods, O
 King!

And thus profane the temple's sacred store,
 In honor of the Idols I adore:
 For sweet dessert, let these my arms suffice,
 Inventing, feigning, every fond device
 By which, as in a cipher's interlacing,
 Thy greatness may be known from my embracing,
 Love's sweetest manna this, in which unite
 Smell, tasting, touch, the hearing, and the sight.

Belshazzar.—In seeing thee, the memory fades away,
 Of all the solemn thoughts I held to-day,

Thy living light in lustrous beauty beams,
 I wake and find thee fairer than my dreams.
 Thy light, alone, I feel,
 Can from my heart the fatal sadness steal,
 That keeps it so dejected.

Thought.—By heaven! this is but just what I expected,
 You're not so foolish, though not overwise:
 As such a glorious supper to despise:—
 Let there be feasting, let us be jolly,
 This night, at least, we'll banish melancholy,
 My folly rises now to exaltation,
 By cynics sometimes called inebriation.

Bel.—Let the gold vessels, which within the shrine
 Of conquered Judah, flowed with mystic wine
 For Israel's priests, those cups so richly chased,
 Be filled for me too.

Tho.— I admire your taste.

Bel.—Go for them.

SCENE THE SEVENTEENTH.

Belshazzar, The Thought, Idolatry, Vanity; Music, Attendants, etc.

Vanity.—(Entering.) Stay; for I the vessels bring,
 From Vanity's hands receive the cups, O King!

Idolatry.—Set out the tables for the supper here,
 Close by the summer-house.

Thought.— For me? Oh! dear.

Idol.—For thee, my friend? Why, who here spoke of thee?

Tho.—He who says supper, speaks he not of me?

For if I am to sup, the thing is clear,
 Señora, that the supper standeth here,
 And this reminds me of an antique song,
 Brief is the moral and the stave not long. (Sings.)

*"Supper for me was made, I think,
 Since I was born to eat and drink,
 For in easy mood, I submit to food,
 When the wine is old and the meat is good."*

(The table is brought in, on which the sacred vessels are displayed; the attendants commence serving the banquet.)

Belshazzar.—Here take your seats ye two; along the sides
Sit ye, my friends, and take what heaven provides;
When even the Temple gives us cups at call,
Be sure the supper has been meant for all:—
Now, let the thanks that to the gods belong,
From your full hearts find utterance in song.

(Music.)

*This table, O Idolatry!
Is an altar raised to thee,
O Vanity! thou'rt here adored,
Since, a thing without example,
The rich vessels of the Temple
Decorate Belshazzar's board.*

(They all take their seats at the table.)

SCENE THE EIGHTEENTH.

Enter Death, disguised as one of the Attendants.

Death.—(Aside.) To the great feast of the king,
Thus disguised I freely enter:
Since at this great supper I
Am concealed and unsuspected,
I believe that I can hide me
'Mong the crowd of his attendants.
Careless here Belshazzar sits,
And of me has no remembrance,
Circled by his women round,
By his nobles and dependents.
Those rich cups which Solomon
To the one true God presented,
And with which his holy priests
Sacrificial rites effected,
Here but grace his banquet board. . . .
Oh! thou Judgment of the Eternal,
Loose thy hand now, let mine loose, too,

Tho.— We drink the toast with pleasure:
Thirty thousand gods to-day

Seem too few to fill our revels;
I would like to drink them all.

Idol.—Let song mingle with the pledges.

(Music.)

*This table, O Idolatry!
Is an altar raised to thee,
O Vanity! thou'rt here adored,—
Since, a thing without example,
The rich chalice of the Temple
Drains Belshazzar at his board.*

(A great clap of thunder is heard.)

Bel.—What an awful sound! What means
This tumultuous voice of terror
That doth call the clouds to arm
On the battlefield of Heaven?—

Idol.—When you drank, it must have been
A salute the heavens presented
With their fearful thunder-guns.

Vanity.—See, a gloomy horror settles
O'er the sky, that hides the stars.

Dea.—I, who darkest night engender—
How I love this gloom, this horror!

Bel.—Comets dark, with burning tresses,
Through the air, wild birds of fire
Flash the lightning's flames incessant;
With loud cries of grief and pain
Groans the cloud, as if 'twere pregnant:
It in travail seems to be,
And 'tis so, for from its entrails
Breaks a bright bolt forth, the glowing
Embryo that filled its centre:
When the cloud gives birth to lightning,
Thunder but its cry expresses.

(A louder and more terrific clap of thunder is heard,
accompanied by lightning: on the ceiling of the
hall appears a hand, pointing to a paper, on
which is inscribed, "Mané, Thecel, Pharés.")
See ye not? Oh, woe is me!

Through the trembling air projected
 What is bursting, what is breaking,
 Which, above my head, suspended
 Hangs but by a hair, and glideth
 Toward the wall. Its form presenteth
 The appearance of a hand,
 Of a hand, the cloud has sever'd
 From some monstrous form unseen!—
 Who, oh! who, in lightning, ever,
 Arteries saw till now? I know not
 What its finger writes, what message,
 Since when it has left the impress
 Of three rapid strokes or sketches
 On the wall, to join its body
 Once again the hand ascendeth.
 Pale my cheek has grown, my hair
 Stands on end through fear and terror,
 Trembling throbs my heart, my breath
 Chokes my parched throat, or deserts me.
 For what was the Babel of tongues
 Is to-day the Babel of letters.

Van.—I a burning mountain seem.

Idol.—I a statue of ice resemble.

Tho.—I am neither mountain nor statue,—
 But a nice, fine fear o'erwhelms me.

Bel.—Thou, Idolatry, thou that knowest
 All the gods' deep secrets, tell me
 What do these strange letters mean?

Idol.—These I'm powerless to interpret:
 Even the character I know not.

Bel.—(To Vanity.) Thou, whose genius comprehendeth
 Deepest science—thou, the augur's,
 The magician's, chief preceptress,
 What here read'st thou? Say—What?

Van.—

Nothing;—

Here my genius fails to help me:
 These are all to me unknown.

Bel.—Thou, O Thought! dost comprehend them?

Tho.—You have asked a sage at last!
 I'm an ignorant fool, heaven help me!
Idol.—Daniel, the same Hebrew, who
 Did so well the dream interpret
 Of the statue and the tree,
 He will tell it.

SCENE THE NINETEENTH.

Enter Daniel.

Daniel.— List attentive:—
Mané means that God hath numbered,
 And thy kingdom's days hath ended;
Thecel, that thou hast completed
 The full number, thy offences
 Not admitting one sin more;
Pharés, that a waste, a desert,
 Will thy kingdom be, when seized
 By the Medes and by the Persians.
 Thus the hand of God hath written
 With the finger thy dread sentence,
 And its carrying out hath He
 To the secular arm expressly
 Delegated. This hath God
 Done to thee, because perversely
 Thou, with scorn and ribald jest,
 Hast profaned the sacred vessels.
 For no mortal should misuse
 These pure vessels of the Temple,
 Which, until the law of grace
 Reigns on earth, foreshow a blessed
 Sacrament, when the written Law
 Time's tired hand shall blot forever,
 If these vessels' profanation
 Is a crime of such immenseness,
 Hear the cause, ye mortals, hear it!
 For in them, life, death, are present—
 'Tis that he who receives in sin,
 Desecrates God's holy vessel.

Belshazzar.—In them is there death?

Death.—There is,

When they are by me presented,
I, the pride-born child of sin,
Of whose dark and deadly venom
He who drinks must surely die.

Bel.—Ah! in spite of all my senses,
I believe thee, I believe thee;
For though torpid and dejected,
Through the sight, and through the hearing,
Have thy fearful voice and presence
Penetrated my proud bosom—
To my very soul's seat entered:—
Save me, O Idolatry!
From this agony.

Idol.—I am helpless,
For at the terrific voice
Of that Mystery predestined,
Which you have to-day profaned
In these cups that are its emblems,
All my courage I have lost—
All my former fire and mettle.

Bel.—Help me now, O Vanity!

Vanity.—I am humbled, through Heaven's mercy.

Bel.—Thee, O Thought! . . .

Thought.—Thy greatest foe
Now is in thy Thought presented,
Since you did not wish to heed
The death-warnings it suggested.

Bel.—Daniel!

Dan.—I am God's decree:—
Yea, He hath pronounced thy sentence!
Yea, the measure is filled up!

Tho.—*Nulla est redemptio.*

Bel.—All, ah! all in this dread hour,
In this final need desert me!
Who, oh! who, hath power to save me
From this horror, from this spectre?—

Dea.—No one:—for thou would'st not be
Safe within the abysmal centre
Of the earth.

Bel.— Ah! fire enfolds me!

Dea.—Die, thou sinner!

(Death draws his sword, and stabs Belshazzar; he
then seizes him in his arms, and they struggle
together.)

Bel.— This is death, then!—
Was the venom not sufficient
That I drank of?

Dea.— No: that venom
Was the death of the soul; the body's,
This swift death-stroke representeth.

Bel.—With death's agony upon me,
Sad, despairing, and dejected,
Struggling against odds, and dying,
Soul and body both together,
Hear! ye mortal men, oh! hear,
What doth mean this fearful message,
What this *Mané, Thecel, Pharés*
Of the one Supreme God threatens;—
He who dares profane God's cup,
Him He striketh down forever;
He who sinfully receives,
Desecrates God's holiest vessel!
(Excunt Death and Belshazzar struggling together,
and after them The Thought.)

SCENE THE TWENTIETH.

Idolatry, Vanity, Daniel; then Death.

Idolatry.—Like a sleeper I awaken
From the dreams of my forgetting:
And since even Idolatry
God Himself hath not excepted
From the crowd of living things
In the mystic sheet collected,

Which one day will Christ command
 Peter there to kill and eat of,
 Would that I could see the light
 Of the law of grace, O Heaven!
 Now while reigns the written law!—

Enter Death, dressed as before, with sword and dagger, and a
 cloak covered with skeletons.

Death.—You can see it represented
 In the fleece of Gideon,
 In the Manna of the desert,
 In the honeycomb the lion's
 Mouth contained, in the unblemished
 Lamb, and in the Sacred bread
 Of Proposition.

Daniel.— If these emblems
 Show it not, then be it shown
 In the full foreshadowing presence
 Of the feast here now transformed
 Into bread and wine; stupendous
 Miracle of God; his greatest
 Sacrament in type presented.

(The scene opens to the sound of solemn music; a
 table is seen arranged as an altar, with a remon-
 strance and chalice in the middle, and two wax
 candles at each side.)

Idol.—I, who was Idolatry,
 Who to idols false and empty
 Worship gave, to-day effacing
 Both their names and mine forever,
 Will be Latria, adoring
 Thus this sacrament most blessed.—
 And at its high feast, Madrid
 Celebrates with fitting splendor,
 May Don Pedro Calderon
 For his manifold demerits
 Find excuse:—His faults and ours
 Deign to pardon, and remember
 That the poet's works but shadow
 What the poet had intended.

THE CEREMONY
OF THE
PRINTER'S APPRENTICE
A GERMAN MORALITY PLAY.

BY WILLIAM BLADES.

(Translated by John Rist.)

PERSONAGES.

THE DEPOSITOR.

URIAN, the Depositor's Servant.

THE CORNUTE, or Apprentice.

WITNESSES.

THE PARSON.

SCENE—LÜNEBURG.

Prelude.

My worthy masters all, whom we are glad to see;
Matrons and maidens fair, who fill our hearts with glee;
God's blessing on you all! May his kind care and sway
Rest ever on your heads, and guide you on your way.
I ask of all now here, who honor us to-night
And witness this our play, to understand it right;
Only to act a farce would be of little use—
The moral of our play must be our best excuse.
We wish to show you how by customs old we've stayed,
And how a 'prentice true a journeyman is made
To praise the noble craft of printing I intend
With all my heart and soul. Now, Clio, kindly lend
Your aid! So shall I find the fitting word and phrase
To glorify our art with well-deserved praise.

The art of printing to us came
And as the Queen of Knowledge began her glorious reign
Thou mother of all arts, thou torch that lights our way,
Thou polar star for all who else would go astray!
Thou enemy of wrong, upholder of all right,
Who can withstand thy sword—thy sword of fearful might?

Whence comes to us this boon? Was it a Phidias bold,
Who carved Minerva's form in ivory and gold?
Perhaps 'twas Praxiteles, whose Venus charmed the sight;
Or fearless Dædalus, who vied with birds in flight.
Did printing come to us from Palamedes' field,
The first man who engraved initials on his shield?
Was it Pyrgoteles, who graved on pearl and stone
Great Alexander's head? Of all these it was none;

Nor China, with her arts and learning of old time;
 Nor France, with all her schools and scholars in their prime;
 Nor Holland, who would fain extol her Coster's fame;
 Nor Italy, herself, can the invention claim.
 No, 'twas a German knight, our Gutenberg the stout,
 The man of noble blood, who worked the problem out;
 He lived in fair Mayence, of writers long the seat,
 And there, through trials long, he made the art complete.

THE CEREMONY OF THE PRINTER'S APPRENTICE.

Enter Depositor, who walks up and down, looking about with
 a serious mien and deportment.

Depositor.—What is the reason, I would know.

This house is made so fine a show,
 And with adornments grac'd?
 Folks throng in here as to a dance;
 They cannot come by simple chance
 In such unwonted haste.
 I fain would know what it may mean:
 I'll call my knave, his wit is keen,
 Perhaps he the cause can tell?
 Come here, you rascal!—*Urian!*
 Come here as quickly as you can,
 And answer me right well.

Urian.—Here, master! I come quick and brave
 Out of my corner nest,
 And as your ever faithful slave
 I'll drink now with the best.

Dep.—I am, indeed, quite well aware
 That drinking is your only care;
 But now, I bid thee say,
 Whatever makes this house so trim?
 Why are the walls so bright and prim?
 Whence all these folks so gay?

Uri.—(Holding his nose.) I cannot tell, but by the smell
 A carrion beast must be about;
 Some carcase dead, or fiend from hell,
 Scents all the house throughout.

Dep.—I think myself there's some wild beast
That hereabouts is holding feast;
There is a nasty smell.
But get thee gone! Go to my field,
See that their spades my lab'ers wield,
And that they work right well.

Uri.—Master! your will shall soon be done;
Adieu, mein Herr, now I am gone. (Exit jumping.)

Dep.—(To audience.) There goes that fellow with a bound,
Truly he is an odd compound;
I think he must be mad.
Now he is witty, now a fool,
Now he is wallowing in a pool;
His pranks are very bad.

(Urian reappears, dragging in by the nose the
"Cornute"—i. e., the apprentice, who is dressed
in a most fantastic way, with a big red nose
and a pair of huge horns on his head.)

Dep.—By heaven! what beast have you got here?
'Tis not a goat, nor stag, nor steer!
Say how you captured him.
He is a strange and wondrous sight
As ever saw the Heaven's light:
How got he in such trim?

Uri.—Well! Master, when I went away,
I met this beast careering;
Thought I, 'twon't do for me to stay,
He'll toss me, I am fearing:
So straight I seized him by the nose,
And tore his nostrils badly:
Lord! what a stench from him arose,
It turned my stomach sadly.

Dep.—Zounds! I may well astonished be
At such a beast. What name has he?
I wonder who's his master.
His head (driving his knuckles into it) is hard; his belly
(giving him a punch in it) soft;

Two monstrous horns he bears aloft;
Pray, Urian, bind him faster.

Uri.—What! don't you see at once his kind?
His horns betray the brute;
His misshap'd head, and lack of mind,
Declare him a Cornute.

Dep.—A Cornute! bless me! what is that—
A pig, an ass, a mule, or what?
How wild your speech does run.
But listen, Master Urian,
Suppose we think of some good plan
To make of him some fun.

Uri.—The very thing! Just give a glance,
His legs seem over long;
I'll bet a florin he can dance
To any play or song.
Just like a ghost he soon shall prance,
Your ghosts are very strong.
(Lashes him with a whip, while the music plays loudly.)

Hei! Hei! Hei! Hei! now jump around,
Thou wondrous beast, upon the ground!
Look at the rogue; see how he sways,
As though he had the stomach-ache:
He does not like such dancing ways,
They make his heels too much awake.

(After some more gibes and lashes, Urian shows him a piece of paper.)

Now, gallows-bird! how thou dost stare,
As if thou wast bereft of sense!
This writing read, or else take care
Your head's not crack'd ere you go hence.

Cornutus.—How should I read, you ugly fool?
I, who was never sent to school.

Uri.—(Astonished.) Just listen to the rascal's speech—
He cannot read, and yet can preach.
In high Dutch, too, as if the Devil
In low Dutch couldn't be as civil.

You scamp! at once these lines now read
Or else I'll spell them on your head.

Cor.—(Reading doggedly.) A shameless rogue, a worthless
wight,
A lying knave, I'm called aright.

Dep.—That's right enough, we know it well,
Your character you truly spell.

Uri.—These Cornute folk are all sad liars,—
He said just now he could not read;
'Tis plain of falsehood he ne'er tires;
A very cheat he is, indeed.

Dep.—Forsooth, my knave, so sharp and true,
His dull deceits will ne'er cheat you.
Now feel his pocket on the right,
While I the left expose to light.

Uri.—(Pulling out a letter.) The devil take thee! ha! ha! ha!
Thou canst not read, thou lubber slow,
Thou Mat of Cappadocia,
Thus do I give thy nose a blow. (Smites him.)

Dep.—(Reading the address on the letter.) "To be handed
to the most honorable, much-esteemed, art-knowing young
journeyman, Master N. N., who is my heart's love."

Uri.—(Boxing the Cornute's ears.) See! master mine! this
dullard here
As a young journeyman would stalk,
For which I now have boxed his ear,
To stop his bumptious, bragging talk.

Dep.—In truth, he is a Cornute mean,
Who is not fit one's boots to clean.
Can any mald love one so rude?
This letter doubtless now will tell;
Outside it looks all very well,—
The writing's pretty good.

(Reading.) Beloved of my heart, my hope, my life, my dove,
To whom I always shall devote my utmost love,
A welcome thousandfold take from thy shepherdess,
Who loves her Lucidor with constant kindness.
My love to you I vow is far beyond all measure:

Uri.—Thou lying scamp, thou dirty swine,
Is this your ignorance of reading?
Just now you could not scan a line,
And now as printer you are pleading,
There's not a devil in all Hell
So many shameful lies could tell.

Dep.—Printing's an art in good repute;
Printers are learned and acute;
In solving questions they're not slow—
If thou art thus we fain would know.

(Here Depositor and Urian ask the Cornute a
number of rare and comical questions.)

Dep.—We now must make a further trial.
Tell us, thou son of boorish peasant,
Before all friends that now are present,
Canst play the flute or finger viol?

Uri.—Well thought of, master. Now we've time,
We'll stand around all in a ring,
And while each from his book doth sing,
We'll chant a workman's rhyme.

(Here all the workmen and others present join in
a chorus previously agreed upon, but such an
one as will not give public offense.)

Uri.—This went off very well, indeed.
Zounds, master, it did sound divinely!
I wish my wife were here to speed
The mirth, for she can trip it finely.
Now let us ask this Cornute tame
If to some play he now can treat us—
Cards, dice, or any other game;
But we must mind he does not cheat us!
Here is the box, and here the dice,
A pot of beer shall be the prize;
I'll bet that he can count the eyes.
Now, beast, a main and try your luck.

(As Cornute is about to sit down Urian tips the
bench and upsets him.)

Will you sit quiet, restless buck!

Dep.—Come, now, and shake your elbows, friend.

Cor.—I wish this game was at an end.

Uri.—(Knocking Cornutus over the fingers.) Right valiantly
the dice you throw,
'Tis plain there's not much green in you.
You'll empty soon my purse, I know;
He must be clever you to "do."

Dep.—As by thy tricks I plainly see
That you're as cunning as can be,
Another tack we'll try a bit. (To Urian.)
Bring here our scientific tools,
He takes us for a lot of fools!
But soon he'll see how we can hit.
Arrange the bench and set it right,
Our talents he shall try to-night.

Uri.—At your command, my master good,
I'll fetch you tools as you may want them.
To cure his faults I'm in the mood;
'Twill be a rough task to unplant them.
(Urian fetches an axe, a plane, a saw, a pair of
compasses, a razor, a ham and a forceps, all
made very large of wood. He then throws
down the Cornute on the bench, which upsets.
After a lot of comic business, Cornute is
stretched on the bench.)

Dep.—(To Urian.) First, take the axe and hew him square,
Each corner, bump and angle pare,
Then plane him well till all is straight,
Nor for his cries one jot abate.
Then with my compass, in good sooth,
I soon will see if all be smooth.
(Urian, punching him, kneading him, and chop-
ping him and planing him, knocks him on to
the ground again.)

See how he falls now, all a-heap;
Get up, you Cornute! Art asleep?
Dep.—With compasses I'll test him now.
Lie still! or else you'll get a blow.
(Sticks the compasses into various parts of his
body.)

Well done! this pig so mannerless
 You've planed right smooth, with much address.
 His fingers, though, are still amiss,
 But you know how to alter this;
 So shape them with the file,
 And mind that none of them you miss;
 We'll make the rascal smile.

(Urian rasps his fingers.)

They're in trim now, so let him rise,
 And fetch that ham here in a trice;
 We'll see how he can carve.
 These horned beasts can ne'er say no!
 And as he must a-courting go,
 'Twont do to let him starve.

(A great ham is placed before him, and as the
 Cornute is about to help himself Urian raps
 him on the fingers.)

Thou uncouth lout! what dost thou mean?
 Where are thy manners? Not so speedy!
 Wouldst have first share of fat and lean?
 I'll teach thee not to be so greedy.

Dep.—Now has the time arrived, I ween,
 To trim him up all nice and clean;
 So shave his chin and scrape it.
 And as he is to court a maid,
 The scissors must come to our aid,
 To cut his hair and shape it.

(They daub his face with black soapsuds, then
 shave him with the razor, and pretend to cut
 his hair.)

Uri.—(Pulling open his jaws.) His mouth with teeth is over-
 stocked,
 Too many has he for his share;
 Look at this tusk! I am quite shocked,
 It must come out, and so prepare.

Dep.—A monstrous fang, in length a yard;
 Reach me the forceps; hold him hard.

(He pretends to pull out a tooth.)

Uri.—(Showing a big piece of wood, shaped like a tooth.) In
all my days I never saw
A tusk like this in any jaw.

Dep.—The tooth is out, brave Urian,
Give me pomatum now, my man,
T' anoint his sheepish head;
Should he a maid from far give some ache,
His nearer sight will turn her stomach;
And if he through the streets will go,
The dogs will follow him, I know.

(They rub a lot of foul grease over his head.)

Uri.—Hear me, you maidens! Steel your hearts
Against this brute of evil savor;
He has no manners, no good parts,
And you'd be poison'd by his flavor.

Dep.—Now lend a hand, my trusty knave,
And we his horse-hair head will shave;
While on his head this knife I'll wield
I will to you the scissors yield.
Have done, now, this is quite enough,
So fine is he, that we seem rough.

Uri.—(Knocking his hat over his eyes.) A grand improve-
ment: now let's see
If we can sing another glee:
And try him for the last time.
Our games are nearly over now—
The finis of our game is near;
Present will soon be past 'time.

(Here a Volks-lied may be sung.)

Dep.—(Addressing Cornute.) You've had what you deserv'd;
now say,
Will you reform, and from this day?

Cor.—To live henceforth I will endeavor
In virtue and in honor ever.

Dep.—Good! man of horns; now prithee say
If more of me you want to-day.

Cor.—My great wish is, sir, if you can,
Make me an honest journeyman.

Uri.—For that you are as fit, I vow,
As my grandmother's fat old sow.

Dep.—(Takes up the hatchet and knocks the hat and horns off
the head of Cornutus.) There fall your horns; now
take your oath

That vengeance you will ne'er essay
On either one of us or both

For all the scorn you've had to-day.

(Cornutus takes oath, repeating solemnly after
Depositor.)

Dep.—I swear now at the end

Cor.—I swear now at the end

Dep.—My own cash I can spend,

Cor.—My own cash I can spend,

Dep.—And naught else I intend;

Cor.—And naught else I intend;

Dep.—No vengeance will I seek,

Cor.—No vengeance will I seek,

Dep.—But hold myself quite meek.

Cor.—But hold myself quite meek,
And offer you my cheek.

Dep.—(Gives him a hard box on the ear.) Your wages take
thus from my hand,

Henceforth from no one you shall stand

Such treatment as to-day's;

And now confess each evil deed,

Take good advice to serve your need,

And then go on your way.

Uri.—(To the audience.) Our merry play is nearly done,

The Parson will be now appearing

To do his office. I, for one,

Bid you good-bye, and make a clearing. (Exit.)

Dep.—(To the audience.) Amongst you all, if there be one

Who to our ancient gild would come,

Let him speak out, and with forms old

And all due rites we'll him enfold.

Let him appear, and we, with pain,
Will go through this, our play, again. (Exit.)

(Here the two witnesses go out and reënter, conducting the Parson, who is in full priest's canonicals.)

Parson.—Good friends and masters all, I give you joy and greeting

What are your wishes, and for what this happy meeting?
I'm told you want me; well, I'm here;
If I can be of use, make it appear.

Witnesses.—Most honor'd sir, this youngster here

Has undergone our proofs severe
With patience and endurance.
We now entreat you set him free
From Cornute bonds, and let him be
Of good hope and assurance.
With water sprinkle him this night,
And tell him how to live aright,
And guide his life in ev'ry part
In true accordance with our art.

Par.—I will do this, but first of all
The Cornute on his knees must fall;
Confession must be made,
And then afresh he shall be named,
Or by our guild I shall be blamed
For leaving part unsaid.

(Here the Cornute shall confess to the priest as follows:)

Cor.—Good master, please to hear what I am now confessing,
Acknowledging that I have spent in sin my days;
To follow wicked men I never wanted pressing.
To vice and actions bad I always gave my praise.
To no one did I good—in doing wrong I revelled;
In mischief I rejoiced—I was an idle thief;
When everything went wrong, I laughed as if bedevilled,
When others were in luck my heart was filled with grief.
When of my 'prenticeship the term was gone and over
I was exceeding proud, as Grandee I would pose,

Who in his vain conceit could always live in clover;
 Altho' no man did more all goodness to oppose.
 I loved to be called "Sir," or "Monsieur," or "Signore,"
 And liked to make pretense I was a man of mark,
 So lost in self-conceit was I, and in vain-glory,
 That I was oft in broils, and did in strife embark,
 I had no mind for art, for manners, nor for learning,
 So that at last horns of brutes grew on my head;
 But you, good sir, who have my warmest thanks been
 earning,
 Have freed me from these horns, and made me "man"
 instead.
 A printer-journeyman I now am by your labor,
 As plainly has been seen by all our honored guests,
 And now I mean to live so as to gain the favor
 Of God, and all true men; and here my purpose rests.

(This confession ended, the Parson bids him rise,
 and thus addresses him:)

Par.— I'm very glad to find
 You mean to bear in mind
 Your own renown and fame,
 And this, your trial, over,
 As printer you'll endeavor
 To uphold the printer's name.

You have now truly told—
 And fully did unfold
 How you have sinn'd of yore;
 Your tricks and their bad ending,
 And that you are intending
 To cancel the old score.

Now, if you wish to labor
 For honor and for favor,
 To Virtue's voice give heed.
 I'll call you then in gladness,
 When free from vice and badness,
 A journeyman indeed.

My good advice now take,
It is no joke I make,
I speak for your good weal;
And first to find endeavor,
A master kind and clever,
Who has with you to deal.

Beware of lies and slander,
From truth you shall not wander,
Be mindful of your fame.
With gamblers have no dealing,
Their trade is fraud and stealing,
They bring to want and shame.

In speech and manner able,
Be modest at the table
As an invited guest.
Speak well to get a hearing,
But be not overbearing,
Talk less than all the rest.

If you'd gain approbation,
Still keep in mind your station;
Don't speak without sure proof.
The absent never slander,
In idleness ne'er wander,
From bad men keep aloof.

Do not retail each rumor,
Such is an evil humor,
And often leads to woe.
But when your fellows gabble,
And joke, and idly babble,
Leave them alone to go.

Of scolding and of railing
Beware,—it is a failing;
To quarrel still be coy.
Refrain from tender cooing,
Matrons and maids pursuing
Will never bring you joy.

Hear much, but keep from telling,
Tales are forever swelling,
 Much talk leads to disgrace.
At work be ever steady,
But be not over-ready
 To take another's place.

Full many make pretense,
With neither brains nor sense,
 To play a printer's part.
Avoid their bad example,
Their ignorance is ample—
 Talking is all their art.

Work hard, but work with reason,
Like bees work in the season;
 Make all the gain you may.
He who depends for living
On work, must still be giving
 His mind to it away.

Be proper in all matters,
A man in rags and tatters
 Is in no easy way;
Low is his place at table,
Hardly will he be able
 To find employ and pay.

Attend to proper teachers,
And to the worthy preachers
 Who show us what is good;
Go still to church to pray,
On God look as your stay,
 The Bible as your food.

Of right be the defender
Against each wrong pretender.
 Your promise never break.
Keep clear of debt—'tis sorrow—
Earn all, but never borrow:
 Debts make the strong man weak.

Remember what I've said
As through the paths you tread
Of our immortal art.
God's blessing now be on you;
Where'er your fate may lead you
Act like a man your part.

(The Parson then calls on the Witnesses to come forward, and asks them to name the new journeyman. This done, he solemnly sprinkles him with water, but in such a manner that nobody shall be offended thereby, and pronounces over him these words:)

I hereby confirm and incorporate thee, N. N., in the name
of our whole Companionship,

Veneris, Cereris, Bacchi,

Per pocula poculorum,

Amen.

THIS IS THE END OF OUR PLAY.

The ceremony being now over, the friends come forward and present gifts to the new journeyman, and wish him good luck. Sometimes a ball is given by the new journeyman or his parents.

Before the company separates, a young workman, dressed as Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, or as a beautiful matron representing *Typographia*, comes forward, holding a book, or the model of a printing press, and thanks them for their presence in an

EPILOGUE.

Our guests and masters good, you maidens and you matrons,
Who of this play of ours are pleas'd to be the patrons,
Receive our hearty thanks for your attractive presence;
Your favor is of our content the sweetest essence.
True 'tis we have not shown to you the real old play,
Such as in olden times our workmen did portray
In this our ancient town; such was not our intent,
But just to keep alive old customs we are bent:
We've only tried to prove how much our art we love,
As our forefathers did—to do the like we strove.

The noble printing art that came from Heaven down
Has merited full well all credit and renown.
The world now follows fast the teaching of our art,
And gets from her all joys for body, soul and heart.
Nor say we this alone—our Emperor renown'd
For his magnificence, and with bright laurels crown'd,
Loves this our art right well, and deems its glory true,
As though to his right hand had fall'n a kingdom new.
Our sages and divines, who at all errors strike,
Show to our art their love and gratitude alike.

But pause! why speak alone of men—they are but mortal,
When God Almighty has our art used as a portal;
From whence His holy word may issue and may spread,
A solace for all souls, and of each life the bread.
The Bible now makes bloom the arid wilderness,
Then let all men unite to bless the printing press.

Creator ever good! Great Father of all grace,
We pray to Thee to spread our art to every race.
Our master printers good, and their relations all,
We recommend to Thee—be with them, great and small;
And let Thy holy word be printed by their hands,
And for the common good be spread throughout all lands.
Protect our noble art from all adversity,
And we will praise Thy name to all eternity.

And now you maidens fair, matrons and masters all,
Who kindly have to-day responded to our call,
We thank you from our hearts; your presence at our labor
Shows plainly to us all that we enjoy your favor.
And if our play to-night has not been good to see—
Nothing is perfect quite—next time 'twill better be.
At present fare you well, good wishes with us send,
To please you all has been our only aim and end.
All times and everywhere we are at your command,
So long as worthy books find readers in our land.

Although known as a Morality play, it will be seen
that there is little of the religious element in the *Print-*

er's Apprentice. Rather is it in the nature of a farce, presenting in outline the rude ceremonies performed at the admission of the apprentice to the rank of journeyman. Such ceremonies were always performed on these occasions, and were followed by feasting and drinking, greatly depleting the pocket of the apprentice, or that of his father or guardian; for money was freely lavished, since on the splendor of the entertainment and the abundance and quality of the ensuing banquet depended the standing of the new journeyman.

EVERY-MAN.

A MORALITY.

BY THOMAS HAWKINS, M.A.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MESSENGER.

GOD.

DEATH.

EVERY-MAN.

FELLOWSHIP.

KINDRED.

GOODS.

GOOD DEEDS.

KNOWLEDGE

CONFESSION.

BEAUTY.

STRENGTH.

DISCRETION

FIVE WITS.

ANGEL.

DOCTOR.

Every Man.

God speaketh.

God.—I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not my righteousness, the sharp rod;
My love that I showed when I for them died
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two it cannot be denied;
To give them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head;
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me:
They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
As pride, covetousness, wrath and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable:
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company,
Every man liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appeareth faste,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of every man's person;
For, and I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts:

For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they do all clean forget:
I hoped well that every man
In my glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I them have lent:
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily;
They be so encumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On every man living without fear.—
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

Death.—Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

God.—Go thou to Every-man,
And show him in my name,
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in nowise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning,
Without delay or any tarrying.

Dea.—Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly out search both great and small;
Every man will I beset that liveth beastly,
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly:
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart
His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell world without end.
Lo, yonder I see Every-man walking:
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts, and his treasure;
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord heaven king.—
Every-man, stand still: whither art thou going
Thus gayly? hast thou thy maker forgot?

Every-man.—Why asketh thou?
Wouldst thou wait?

Dea.—Ye, sir, I will show you;
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.

Ever.—What, sent to me!

Dea.—Ye, certainly:
Though thou have forgot him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere;
As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

Ever.—What desireth God of me?

Dea.—That shall I show thee;
A reckoning he will needs have
Without any longer respite.

Ever.—To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.

Dea.—On thee thou must take a long journey,
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,
For turn again thou cannot by no way:
And look, thou be sure of thy reckoning;
For before God thou shalt answer and show
Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few,
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise
Have I do we were in that way,
For, wait thou well, thou shalt make no attorney.

Ever.—Full unready I am such reckoning to give:
I know thee not; what messenger art thou?

Dea.—I am Death, that no man dreadeth;
For every man I rest, and no man spareth,
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.

Ever.—O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind:
In thy power it lieth me to save;
Yet of my good will I give thee, if thou will be kind,
Yea, a thousand pounds shalt thou have.
And defer this matter till another day.

Dea.—Every-man, it may not be by no way;
I set not by gold, silver nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke nor princes;

For, and I would receive gifts great,
All the world I might get;
But my custom is clean contrary:
I give thee no respite, come hence, and not tarry.

Ever.—Alas, shall I have no longer respite?

I may say, Death giveth no warning:
To think on thee it maketh my heart sick;
For all unready is my book of reckoning:
But twelve years and I might have abiding,
My accounting book I would make so clear
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
Wherefore, Death, I pray thee for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

Dea.—Thee availeth not to cry, weep and pray:

But hast thee lightly that thou were going this journey:
And prove thy friends if thou can;
For, wait thou well, the tide abideth no man,
And in the world each living creature
For Adam's sin must die of nature.

Ever.—Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,

And my reckoning surely make,
Show me, for Saint Charity,
Should I not come again shortly?

Dea.—No, Every-man, and thou be once there,

Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.

Ever.—O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,

Have mercy on me in this most need.—
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

Dea.—Yea, if any be so hardy,

That would go with thee, and bear thee company:
High thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
What, wantest thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?

Ever.—I had wanted so, verily.

Dea.—Nay, nay; it was but lent thee,

For as soon as thou art gone,

Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefrom,
 Even as thou hast done.
 Every-man, thou art made, thou hast thy wits five;
 And here on earth will not amend thy life;
 For suddenly I do come.

Ever.—O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,
 That I might escape this endless sorrow!—
 Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
 That I may amend me
 With good advisement.

Dea.—Nay, thereto I will not consent,
 Nor no man will I respite;
 But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
 Without any advisement.
 And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
 See thou make thee ready shortly,
 For thou mayst say, this is the day
 That no man living may escape away.

Ever.—Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep:
 Nor have I no manner of company
 To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
 And also my writing is full unready.
 How shall I do now for to excuse me!
 I would to God I had never beget;
 To my soul a full great profit it had be;
 For now I fear pains huge and great.
 The time passeth:—Lord, help that all wrought;
 For though I mourn it availeth naught:
 The day passeth, and is almost agone;
 I wot not well what for to do.
 To whom were I best my complaint to make?
 What, and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
 And showed him of this sudden chance!
 For in him is all mine affiance;
 We have in the world so many a day
 Been good friends in sport and play.
 I see him yonder, certainly;
 I trust that he will bear me company,
 Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
 Well met, good Fellowship; and good-morrow.

Fellowship speaketh.

Fellowship.—Every-man, good-morrow by this day:
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If anything be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
That I may help to remedy.

Every-man.—Yea, good Fellowship, yea;
I am in great jeopardy.

Fel.—My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee to my life's end,
In the way of good company.

Ever.—That was well spoken, and lovingly.

Fel.—Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress:
If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee,
Though that I know before that I should die.

Ever.—Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.

Fel.—Tusshe! by thy thanks I set not a straw;
Show me your grief, and say no more.

Ever.—If I my heart should to you break,
And then you to turn your mind from me,
And would not me comfort when ye hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

Fel.—Sir, I say as I will do, indeed.

Ever.—Then be you a good friend at need;
I have found you true here before.

Fel.—And so ye shall evermore;
For, in faith, and thou go to hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way.

Ever.—Ye speak like a good friend, I believe you well;
I shall deserve it and I may.

Fel.—I speak of no deserving, by this day;
For he that will say and nothing do,
Is not worthy with good company to go:
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most lovingly and kind.

Ever.—I shall show you how it is
Commanded, I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous;
And give a straight account without delay
Before the high judge Adonai:
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

Fel.—That is matter, indeed; promise is duty,
But and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well it should be to my pain:
Also it makes me afraid certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear a strong man.

Ever.—Why, ye said—if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake quick indeed,
Though it were to hell truly.

Fel.—So I said, certainly;
But such pleasures be set aside, the sooth to say,
And also if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?

Ever.—Nay, never again till the day of doom.

Fel.—In faith, then will not I come there:
Who hath you these tidings brought?

Ever.—Indeed, Death was with me here.

Fel.—Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath journey,
Not for the father that begat me.

Ever.—Ye promised otherwise, pard.

Fel.—I know well I say so truly,
And yet if thou wilt eat and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women the lusty company,
I would not forsake you while the day is clear,
Trust me verily.

Ever.—Yea, thereto ye would be ready:
To go to mirth, solace and play.
Your mind will sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.

Fel.—Now, in good faith, I will not that way;

But and thou wilt murder, or any man kill,

In that I will help thee with a good-will.

Ever.—O, that is a simple advice indeed:

Gentle Fellowship, help me in my necessity;

We have loved long, and now I need,

And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me.

Fel.—Whether ye have loved me or no,

By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

Ever.—Yet I pray thee, take the labor, and do so much for me,

To bring me forward, for Saint Charity,

And comfort me till I come without the town.

Fel.—Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,

I will not a foot with thee go;

But and thou had tarried, I would not have left thee so:

And as now, God speed thee in thy journey!

For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

Ever.—Whither away, Fellowship? wilt you forsake me?

Fel.—Ye, by my say; to God I betake thee.

Ever.—Farewell, good Fellowship; for this my heart is sore:

Adieu forever, I shall see thee no more.

Fel.—In faith, Every-man, farewell now at the end;

For you I will remember that parting is mourning.

Ever.—Alack! shall we thus depart, indeed?

Aye! Lady, help, without any more comfort,

Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need:

For help in this world whither shall I resort?

Fellowship here before with me would merry make;

And now little sorrow for me doth he take.

It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,

Which in adversity be full unkind.

Now, whither for succor shall I flee,

Since that Fellowship hath forsaken me?

To my kinsmen I will truly,

Praying them to help me in my necessity;

I believe that they will do so;

For kind will creep where it may not go.

I will go say; for yonder I see them go:—

Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

Kindred.—Here be we now at your commandment:

Confession, I pray you, show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.

Confession.—Yea, Every-man, and to us declare

If ye be disposed to go anywhere;
For, wait you well, will live and die together.

Kin.—In wealth and woe we will with you hold;

For over his kin a man may be bold.

Ever.—Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind;

Now shall I show you the grief of my mind.

I was commanded by a messenger,

That is a high king's chief officer;

He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,

And, I know well, I shall never come again:

Also I must give a reckoning straight;

For I have a great enemy that hath me in wait,

Which intendeth me for to hinder.

Kin.—What account is that which ye must render?

That would I know.

Ever.—Of all my works I must show,

How I have lived, and my days spent;

Also of ill deeds that I have used

In my time this life was me lent,

And of all virtues that I have refused:

Therefore I pray you, go thither with me

To help to make my account, for Saint Charity.

Con.—What, to go thither? Is that the matter?

Nay, Every-man, I had rather fast on bread and water,

All this five year and more.

Ever.—Alas, that ever I was born!

For now shall I never be merry,

If that you forsake me.

Kin.—Aye, sir; what, ye be a merry man:

Take good heart to you, and make no moan.

But one thing I warn you, by Saint Ann,

As for me ye shall go alone.

Ever.—My Confession, will you not with me go?

Con.—No, by our Lady, I have the cramp in my toe:

Trust not to me; for, so God me speed,
I will deceive you in your most need.

Kin.—It avalleth not us to ties:
Ye shall have my maid, with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.

Ever.—Now show me the very effect of your mind;
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

Kin.—Abide behind! yea, that will I and I may;
Therefore farewell till another day.

Ever.—How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises men to me make;
But, when I have most need, they me forsake;
I am deceived, that maketh me sad.

Con.—Confession Every-man, farewell now;
For, verily, I will not go with you:
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account, therefore I make tarrying;
Now God keep thee, for now I go.

Ever.—Aye, Jesus, is all come here to?
Lo, fair words maketh fools vain;
They promise, and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly;
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so Fellowship promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide;
Yet in my mind a thing there is,—
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my good now help me might,
He would make my heart full light:
I will speak to him in this distress.—
Where art thou, my Goods, and riches?

Goods.—Who calleth me? Every-man? what haste thou hast?
I lie here in corners trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,

Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
 I cannot stir; in packs low I lie:
 What would ye have, lightly me say?

Ever.—Come hither, Good, in all the haste thou may;
 For of counsel I must desire thee.

Goods.—Sir, and ye in the world have sorrow or adversity,
 That can I help you to remedy shortly.

Ever.—It is another disease that grieveth me;
 In this world it is not, I tell thee so,
 I am sent for another way to go,
 To give a straight account general
 Before the highest Jupiter of all:
 And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee,
 Therefore I pray thee go with me;
 For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
 My reckoning help to clean and purify,
 For it is said ever among
 That money maketh all right that is wrong.

Goods.—Nay, Every-man, I sing another song;
 I follow no man on such voyages,
 For, and I went with thee,
 Thou should fare much the worse for me:
 For because on me thou did set thy mind,
 Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
 That thine account thou cannot make truly;
 And that hast thou for the love of me.

Ever.—That would grieve me full sore,
 When I should come to that fearful answer:
 Up, let us go thither together.

Goods.—Nay, not so; I am too brittle, I may not endure:
 I will follow no man one foot be ye sure.

Ever.—Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
 All my life days on good and treasure.

Goods.—That is to thy damnation without lessening,
 For my love is contrary to the love everlasting;
 But if thou had me loved moderately during,
 As, to the poor give part of me,
 Then shouldst thou not in this dolor be,
 Nor in this great sorrow and care.

Ever.—Lo, now was I deceived or I was aware,
And all I may wait my spending of time.

Goods.—What, wantest thou that I am thine?

Ever.—I had wanted so.

Goods.—Nay, Every-man, I say no:

As for a while I was lent thee;
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill,
If I save one, a thousand I do spill:
Wantest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world not verily.

Ever.—I had wanted otherwise.

Goods.—Therefore to thy soul Good is a thief,
For when thou art dead, this is my guise,
Another to deceive in this same wise,
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprieve.

Ever.—O false Good, cursed thou be,
Thou traitor to God that hast deceived me,
And caught me in thy snare.

Goods.—Mary, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am glad,
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

Ever.—Aye, Good, thou hast had long my heartily love;
I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above:
But wilt thou not go with me, indeed?
I pray the truth to say.

Goods.—No, so God me speed;
Therefore farewell, and have good-day.

Ever.—O, to whom shall I make my moan!
For, to go with me on that heavy journey,
First, Fellowship said he would with me gone;
His words were very pleasant and gay,
But afterward he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
And also they gave me words fair,
They lacked no fair speaking;
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,

In hope to have comfort; but there had I least:
 For my Goods sharply did me tell,
 That he bringeth many into hell.
 Then of myself I was ashamed,
 And so I am worthy to be blamed:
 Thus may I well myself hate.
 Of whom shall I now counsel take?
 I think that I shall never speed
 Till that I go to my Good-deed;
 But, alas! she is so weak
 That she can neither go nor speak:
 Yet will I venture on her now.—
 My Good-deeds, where be you?

Good-deeds.—Here I lie, cold in the ground;
 Thy sins hath me so bound,
 That I cannot stir.

Ever.—O Good-deeds, I stand in fear;
 I must you pray of counsel,
 For help now should come right well.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, I have understanding,
 That ye be summoned a count to make
 Before Myssias of Jerusalem king,
 And you do by me that journey what you will I take.

Ever.—Therefore I come to you my moan to make:
 I pray you, that ye will go with me.

Good-deeds.—I would full fain, but I can not stand verily.

Ever.—Why, is there anything on your fall?

Good-deeds.—Yes, sir, I may thank you of all;
 If ye had perfectly cheered me,
 Your book of count full ready had be.
 Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;
 Aye, see how they lie under the feet,
 To your soul's heaviness.

Ever.—Our Lord Jesus help me,
 For one letter here I cannot see.

Good-deeds.—There is a blind reckoning in time of distress.

Ever.—Good-deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
 Or else I am forever damned, indeed;

Therefore help me to make reckoning
Before the Redeemer of all thing,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, I am sorry for your fall,
And fain would I help you and I were able.

Ever.—Good-deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.

Good-deeds.—That shall I do verily:

Though that on my feet I may not go,
I have a sister that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you make that dreadful reckoning.

Knowledge.—Every-man, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

Ever.—In good condition I am now in everything,
And am whole content with this good thing,
Thanked by God my creature.

Good-deeds.—And when he hath brought you there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your reckoning and your good deeds
together,
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.

Ever.—My Good-deeds, gramercy;
I am well content certainly
With your words sweet.

Kno.—Now go we together lovingly
To Confession, that cleansing river.

Ever.—For joy I weep: I would we were there;
But, I pray you, give me cognition,
Where dwelleth that holy man Confession?

Kno.—In the house of salvation;
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.—
Lo, this is Confession: kneel down, and ask mercy;
For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.

Ever.—O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vice unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen;

I come with Knowledge for my redemption,
 Redempt with heart and full contrition,
 For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
 And great accounts before God to make.
 Now I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,
 Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation.

Con.—I know your sorrows well, Every-man:
 Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
 I will you comfort as well as I can;
 And a precious jewel I will give thee,
 Called penance, voice voider of adversity:
 Therewith shall your body chastised be
 With abstinence and perseverance in God's service;
 Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
 Which is penance strong that ye must endure,
 To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
 With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently:
 So must thou, or thou escape that painful pilgrimage.—
 Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
 And by that time Good-deeds will be with thee;
 But in any wise be seeker of mercy,
 For your time draweth fast; and ye will saved be,
 Ask God mercy, and he will grant truly:
 When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
 The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

Ever.—Thanked be God for his gracious work;
 For now I will my penance begin:
 This bath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
 Though the knots be painful and hard within.

Kno.—Every-man, look your penance that ye fulfil,
 What pain that ever it to you be;
 And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will,
 How your account ye shall make clearly.

Ever.—O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
 O way of righteousness, O goodly vision,
 Which descended down in a virgin pure
 Because he would Every-man redeem,
 Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience,
 O blessed Godhead elect and high divine,

Forgive my grievous offence;
 Here I cry thee mercy in this presence:
 O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer
 Of all the world, hope and conduiter,
 Mirror of joy, founder of mercy,
 Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
 Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be,
 Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life
 Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
 Yet let my name be written in Moses' table.—
 O Mary, pray to the maker of all things
 Me for to help at my ending,
 And save me from the power of my enemy;
 For Death assaileth me strongly:
 And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
 Of your son's glory be a partner,
 By the means of his passion, I it crave;
 I beseech you, help my soul to save.—
 Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance,
 My flesh therewith shall give acquaintance;
 I will now begin, if God give me grace.

Kno.—Every-man, God give you time and space:
 Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour;
 Now may you make your reckoning sure.

Ever.—In the name of the holy Trinity,
 My body sore punished shall be,
 Take this body for the sin of the flesh;
 Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh;
 And in the way of damnation thou did me bring,
 Therefore suffer now strokes of punishing:
 Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
 To save me from purgatory that sharp fire.

Good-deeds.—I thank God, now I can walk and go,
 And am delivered of my sickness and woe;
 Therefore with Every-man I will go, and not spare,
 His good works I will help him to declare.

Kno.—Now, Every-man, be merry and glad;
 Your Good-deeds cometh now, ye may not be sad:
 Now is your Good-deeds whole and sound,
 Going upright upon the ground.

Ever.—My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory:
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will abide by thee in every stound.

Ever.—Welcome, my Good-deeds, now I hear thy voice
I weep for very sweetness of love.

Kno.—Be no more sad, but ever rejoice,
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on his garment to thy behove,
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When ye to your journey's end come shall.

Ever.—Gentle Knowledge, what do ye it call?

Kno.—It is a garment of sorrow,
From pain it will you borrow;
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness,
He pleaseth God passing well.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, will you wear it for your heal?

Ever.—Now blessed be Jesus, Mary's son;
For now have I on true contrition:
And let us go now without tarrying.—
Good-deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

Good-deeds.—Yea, indeed, I have it here.

Ever.—Then I trust we need not fear:—
Now, friends, let us not part entwain.

Kin.—Nay, Every-man, that will we not certain.

Good-deeds.—Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

Ever.—Who should they be?

Good-deeds.—Discretion and Strength they helght,
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

Kno.—Also, ye must call to mind
Your Five-wits as for your counselors.

Good-deeds.—You must have them ready at all hours.

Ever.—How shall I get them hither?

Kin.—You must call them all together,
And they will hear you in continent.

Ever.—My friends, come hither, and be present,
Discretion, Strength, my Five-wits and Beauty.

Beauty.—Here at your will we be all ready;
What will ye that we should do?

Good-deeds.—That ye would with Every-man go,
And help him in his pilgrimage:
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?

Strength.—We will bring him all thither
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

Discretion.—So will we go with him all together.

Ever.—Almighty God, loved might thou be;
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, Five-wits, lack I naught:
And my Good-deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in my company at my will here;
I desire no more to my business.

Str.—And I Strength will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

Five-wits.—And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

Bea.—No more will I unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

Disc.—Every-man, advise you first of all,
Go with a good advisement and deliberation:
• We all give you virtuous monition,
That all shall be well.

Ever.—My friends, harken what I will tell;
I pray God reward you in his heaven sphere;
Now hearken all that be here;
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present:
In alms, half my goods I will give with my hands twain,
In the way of charity, with good intent,

And the other half still shall remain,
 In queth to be returned there it ought to be.
 This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,
 To go quite out of his parallel
 Ever after and this day.

Kno.—Every-man, hearken what I say;
 Go to priesthood I you advise,
 And receive of him in any wise
 The holy sacrament and ointment together,
 Then shortly see, ye return again hither,
 We will all abide you here.

Five-wits.—Yea, Every-man, hie you that ye ready were:
 There is no emperor, king, duke nor baron,
 That of God hath commission,
 As hath the least priest in the world benign;
 For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign
 He beareth the keys, and thereof hath the cure
 For man's redemption, it is ever sure,
 Which God for our soul's medicine
 Gave us out of his heart with great pain,
 Here in this transitory life for thee and me:
 The blessed sacraments, seven there be,
 Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
 And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,
 Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;
 These seven be good to have in remembrance,
 Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

Ever.—Fain would I receive that holy body;
 And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

Five-wits.—Every-man, that is the best that ye can do;
 God will you to salvation bring,
 For priesthood exceedeth all other things;
 To us holy scripture they do teach,
 And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;
 God hath to them more power given
 Than to any angel that is in heaven:
 With five words he may consecrate
 God's body in flesh and blood to make,
 And handleth his maker between his hands,
 The priest blindeth and unbindeth all bands

Both in earth and in heaven,—
Thou ministers all the sacraments seven,
Though we kiss thy feet thou were worthy,
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly,
No remedy we find under God,
But all only priesthood.
Every-man, God gave priest that dignity,
And setteth them in his stead among us to be;
Thus be they above angels in degree.

Kno.—If priests be good it is so surely,
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart,
There he gave out of his blessed heart
The same sacrament in great torment,
He sold them not to us that Lord omnipotent,
Therefore Saint Peter, the apostle doth say,
That Jesus' curse hath all they
Which God their favor do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell,
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad,
Their children sitteth by other men's fires I have heard,
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life as lusts of lechery;
These be with sin made blind.

Five-wits.—I trust to God, no such may we find:
Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our soul's succor;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be,
By whom we all be kept in surety.—
Peace! for yonder I see Every-man come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.

Good-deeds.—Methink, it is he, indeed.

Ever.—Now Jesus be your alder speed!
I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction;
Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it:
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod your hand;
And shortly follow me;
I go before there I would be: God be your guide.

Str.—Every-man, we will not from you go,
Till ye have done this voyage long.

Disc.—I, Discretion, will abide by you also.

Kno.—And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
I will never part you from:
Every-man, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Machabee.

Ever.—Alas! I am so faint I may not stand.
My limbs under me doth fold:
Friends, let us not return again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold;
For into this cave must I creep,
And return to earth and there to sleep.

Bea.—What, into this grave? Alas!

Ever.—Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.

Bea.—And what, should I smother here?

Ever.—Yea, by my faith, and never more appear;
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.

Bea.—I cross out all this: adieu, by Saint John;
I take my tap in my lap, and am gone.

Ever.—What, Beauty? whither will ye?

Bea.—Peace! I am deaf, I look not behind me,
Not and thou wouldst give me all the gold in thy chest.

Ever.—Alas! whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away from me,
She promised with me to live and die.

Str.—Every-man, I will thee also forsake and deny,
Thy game liketh me not at all.

Ever.—Why, then, ye will forsake me all:
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

Str.—Nay, sir, by the rod of grace,
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep to thy heart to brast.

Ever.—Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

Str.—Yea, I have you far enough conveyed:
Ye be old enough, I understand,

Your pilgrimage to take on hand;
I repent me, that I hither came.

Ever.—Strength, you to displease I am to blame;
Will ye break promise that is debt?

Str.—In faith, I care not:
Thou art but a fool to complain;
You spend your speech, and waste your brain:
Go, thrust thee into the ground.

Ever.—I had wanted surer I should you have found:
He that trusteth in his Strength,
She him deceiveth at the length,
Both Strength and Beauty forsake me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

Disc.—Every-man, I will after Strength be gone;
As for me, I will leave you alone.

Ever.—Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?

Disc.—Yea, in faith, I will go from thee;
For when Strength goeth before,
I follow after evermore.

Ever.—Yet I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
Look into my grave once piteously.

Disc.—Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell every one.

Ever.—O, all things faileth, save God alone,
Beauty, Strength and Discretion;
For, when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.

Five-wits.—Every-man, my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

Ever.—Alas! then may I wail and weep;
For I took you for my best friend.

Five-wits.—I will no longer thee keep:
Now farewell, and there an end.

Ever.—O Jesus, help! all hath forsaken me.

Good-deeds.—Nay, Every-man, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee, indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

Ever.—Gramercy, Good-deeds, now may I true friends see;

They have forsaken me every one,
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

Kno.—Ye, Every-man, when ye to death shall go;
But not yet for no manner of danger.

Ever.—Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

Kno.—Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
Till I see where ye shall be come.

Ever.—Methink, alas! that I must be gone
To make my reckoning, and my debts pay;
For, I see, my time is nigh spent away.—
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I love best do forsake me;
Except my Good-deeds, that abideth truly.

Good-deeds.—All earthly things is but vanity,
Beauty, Strength and Discretion do man forsake,
Foolish friends, and kinsmen, that fair spake;
All fleeth save Good-deeds, and that am I.

Ever.—Have mercy on me, God most mighty,—
And stand by me thou mother and maid, holy Mary,

Good-deeds.—Fear not, I will speak for thee.

Ever.—Hear I cry God mercy.

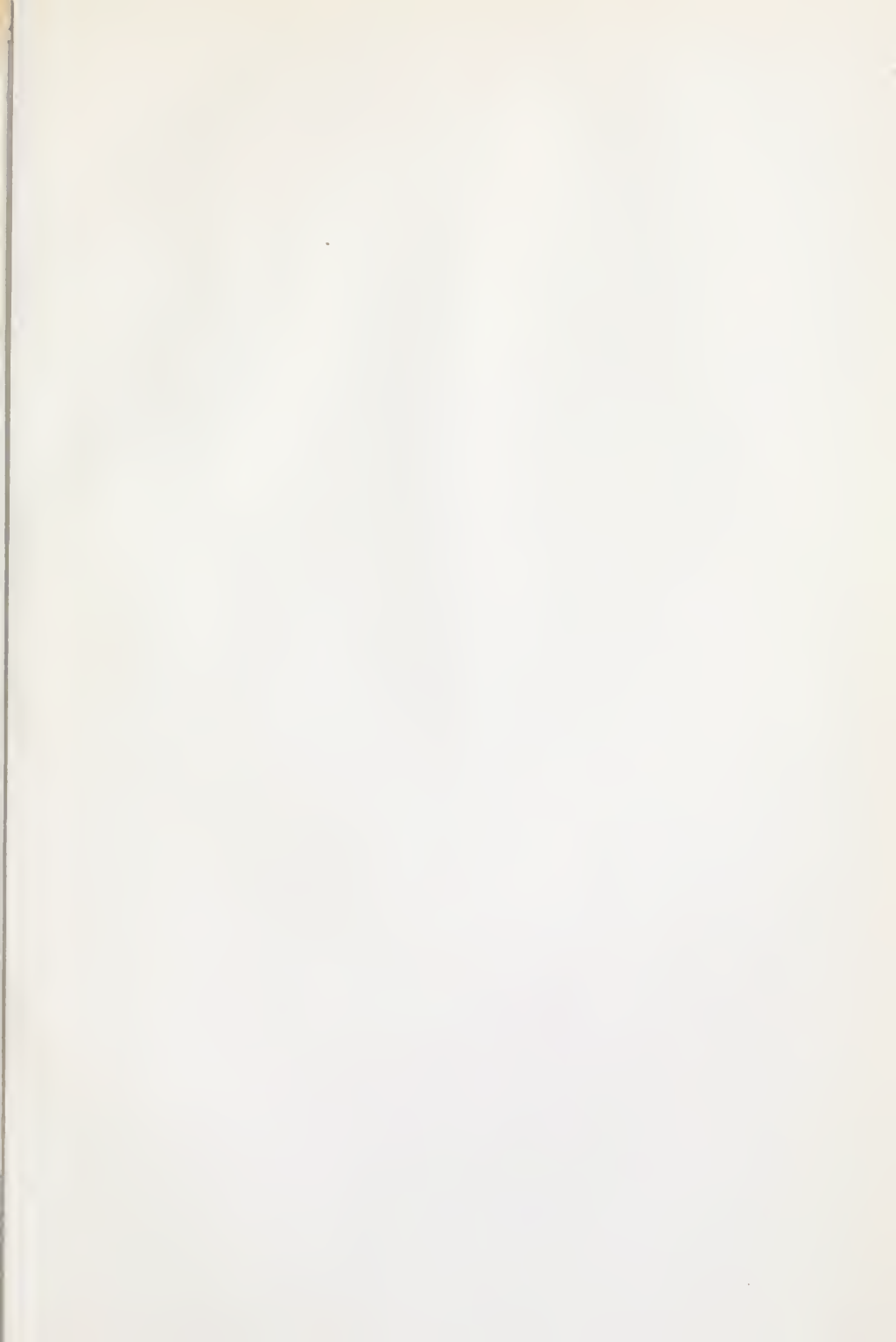
Good-deeds.—Shorten our end and diminish our pain:
Let us go, and never come again.

Ever.—Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend,
Receve it, Lord, that it be not lost;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom:
(In manus tuas)—of might's most
Forever—(commendo spiritum meum.)

Kno.—Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure,
The Good-deeds shall make all sure;
Now hath he made ending:
Me thinketh that I hear angels sing,
And make great joy and melody,
Where every man's soul received shall be.

The Angel.—Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesus,
Here above thou shalt go,
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now the soul is taken the body from,
Thy reckoning is crystal clear;
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.

Doctor.—This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember Beauty, Five-wits, Strength and Discre-
tion,
They all at the last do Every-man forsake,
Save his Good-deeds, there doth he take:
But beware, and they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all;
None excuse may be there for Every-man:
Alas! how shall he do then,
For after death amends may no man make;
For then mercy and pity doth him forsake;
If his reckoning be not clean when he doth come,
God will say—Ite, maledicti, in ignem æternum:
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither,
That we may live body and soul together;
Thereto help the Trinity:
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.

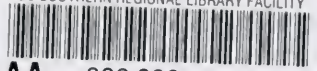




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